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Your medical device may be spying on you: experts

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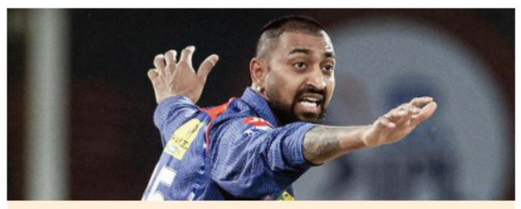

SUPER GIANT

Krunal's allround show helps LSG beat SRH

SPORT » PAGE 15

Centre tells States to do more COVID tests

Average daily cases jump from 571 three weeks ago to over 4,000 now; Home Ministry directs States to step up vaccination, identify hotspots

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

At a time when COVID-19 cases in the country are seeing a sustained spike, 23 States and Union Territories have testing rates that are even lower than the current national average of 100 tests per million people, the Health Ministry said at a review meeting on Friday.

It urged all States to swiftly ramp up testing and also increase the share of RT-PCR tests, which offer more accurate results.

According to data released at the review, 4,188 average daily cases were recorded in India in the week ending April 7, in comparison to just 571 daily cases three weeks ago. The weekly positivity rate is now at 3.02%.

Much of the surge is located in eight States; in Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi, 10 or more districts are reporting positivity rates above 10%; apart from these, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Haryana also have more than five districts reporting positivity rates above 5%.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya also advised States to ramp up vaccination, especially of vulnerable populations, identify emerging hotspots of infection, and ensure preparedness by holding mock drills of hospital infrastructure next week.

Globally, 88,503 daily average cases are being reported this week.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Lessons in safety: Students attending a class wearing masks on the outskirts of Jammu on Friday. PTI

T.N. accords sanction for graft case probe against Palaniswami

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has accorded sanction to the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to initiate a detailed inquiry and probe allegations of irregularities against AIADMK general secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami in the construction of buildings for government medical colleges across the State.

According to highly placed sources, the sanction was given after the DVAC found *prima facie* evidence in the allegations that buildings were constructed in violation of the National Medical Commission's norms. Mr. Palaniswami held the Public Works portfolio during his tenure as Chief Minister from 2017-21.

The agency sought the sanction to conduct a detailed inquiry under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. This section deals with investigation of offences stemming from recommendations or decisions made by a public servant while discharging official duties.

The DVAC decided to hand over the matter to the Special Investigation Cell that deals with sensitive cases. In a detailed inquiry, investigators can examine witnesses and scrutinise documents.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Edappadi K. Palaniswami

NEARBY

All eyes on BJP parliamentary board meet today

BENGALURU
All eyes are now set on the BJP parliamentary board meeting scheduled for Saturday evening in New Delhi, where the first list of candidates elections will be finalised.
» Page 6

Government offers ₹35 crore to UVCE

BENGALURU
After outrage from students, political parties and various public representatives, the Karnataka government has given the approval to release ₹35 crore to UVCE in Bengaluru.
» Page 2

PROPERTYPLUS » PAGE 5

Tax paid by senior citizens surges to over ₹1 lakh cr.

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

There has been a surprising surge in income tax payments from senior citizens during the past year, lifting the overall tax collections from the 60+ population by as much as 61.5% from pre-COVID levels to surpass ₹1 lakh crore.

While personal income tax flows have grown at a faster pace of around 24% vis-a-vis corporate taxes (up 16.9%) through 2022-23, the growth in revenues from senior citizens is far higher. In the first 11 months of 2022-23, taxes paid by senior citizens jumped 35.5% from the ₹83,756 crore collected from them in the entire previous year, to well over ₹1.13 lakh crore, show Finance Ministry data.

By contrast, taxes yielded by those in their golden years had risen 5% in 2021-22 and 13.6% in 2020-21, when these collections were under ₹80,000 crore. While taxes collected from senior citizens have already risen over 61% between 2019-20 and 2022-23, the number of such taxpayers increased 18.6% over the same period from 73.1 lakh to 86.71 lakh, as per official Finance Ministry data.

Tax practitioners are puzzled by this sharp rise in revenues flowing from this demographic, but believed a combination of factors may have driven this uptick. Those probable causes include arrears paid to defence pensioners, higher capital gains and dividend tax collections due to changes introduced in recent Budgets, along with the boom in the stock markets over 2021-22, whose tax dues were payable last year.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Passenger who tried to open emergency exit of flight held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An unruly passenger travelling from Delhi to Bengaluru on an Indigo flight not only caused inconvenience to his co-passengers but also tried to open the emergency exit mid-flight.

The passenger, identified as Prateek, 40, hailing from Delhi and working with a multinational company, was in an inebriated state, the police said. "He was drunk and created a ruckus on the flight. When emergency instructions were being given, he tried opening the flap of the emergency exit door," a senior official said.

"On noticing this violation, the crew on board alerted the captain and the passenger was appropriately cautioned. There was no compromise on the safe operation of the flight, and the unruly passenger was handed over to CISF upon arrival in Bengaluru," Indigo Airlines said in a statement. He was arrested by Kempegowda International Airport police.

Disappointed Congress ticket aspirants raise a banner of revolt

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

The Congress, the first party to announce candidates for three-fourths of the total seats for the Karnataka Legislative Assembly elections, is now facing rebel trouble as many disappointed aspirants have revolted against the official candidates in over a dozen constituencies. Some leaders have also threatened to quit the party.

The Congress is facing the heat largely because of giving the ticket to those who have migrated from other parties. The alleged distribution of the ticket among loyalists of former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar is another factor for the rebellion.

The party had earlier managed to quell the rebellion after releasing the first list of 124 candidates. But the choice of 42 candidates in the second list has led to intense anger in several constituencies. Party loyalists and disappointed aspirants have openly revolted against candidates in Chitradurga, Gangavati, Kadur, Dharwad, Gokak, Holalkere, Tumakuru city, Madikeri, Kalghatagi, Channagiri, Tirthahalli, Bilagi, Belur, Molakalmuru, Rajajinagar, and in other constituencies. Many committed party workers have opposed giving ticket to "imported" leaders.

There are clear signs of dissidence in Chitradurga constituency. Disappointed ticket aspirant Raghu Achar, a former MLC, is toying with the idea of joining Janata Dal (S). In fact, JD (S) MLC T.A. Sharavana called on Mr. Achar. A clip of a telephonic talk between JD (S) State president C.M. Ibrahim and Mr. Achar has gone viral. In the audio, Mr. Ibrahim reportedly asked Mr. Achar to speak to JD (S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy about his plan to join the party [JD-S].

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

N.Y. Gopalakrishna

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New-found aggression does the trick for Nitu

The 22-year-old rained punches on her rivals at the World championships on her way to being crowned the 48kg champion. What makes her so good and what does the future hold for her?

GETTY IMAGES

Y.B. Sarangi

It is one thing to idolise six-time World champion M.C. Mary Kom and it's another to follow in her footsteps to become a title holder. Newly crowned 48kg World champion Nitu Ghanghas, who was once complimented by Mary during the former's days as a youth boxer, has not only replicated one of her idol's achievements, but has also proved the legend's assessment right.

Fighting in the lightest weight class, which typically presents a fine combination of deft footwork, technical excellence and tactical execution, the composed Nitu manifested her new-found aggression in the recently concluded World women's boxing championships in Delhi.

The southpaw showcased her attacking instincts as she rained power-packed punches on her opponents and secured a rare hat-trick, winning the first three bouts after the referee stopped the contest (RSC) each time, to reach the semifinals and assure herself of a medal.

The change in her approach was carefully cultivated.

"Until last year, Nitu used to wait and counterattack. This year, she has become more aggressive. Now she does not wait after landing one punch on the opponent. Rather, she unleashes rapid-fire shots. That's why she got RSC victories against some good boxers. Such a dominating win generates fear in the mind of your next opponent," says chief National coach Bhaskar Bhatt.

> Nitu has come a long way — physically, technically and tactically. Her game sense, which is very important for a boxer's growth, has improved with experience
>
> **JAGDISH SINGH**
> Coach, Bhiwani Boxing Club

The semifinal (against two-time Asian champion Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan) and the final (against double Asian bronze medallist Altantsetseg Lutsaikhan of Mongolia) were tough, but Nitu displayed nerves of steel and a sound gameplan to take her maiden World title in front of a rapturous house, including many from her village Dhanana in the country's boxing factory – Bhiwani.

It was only apt that a fellow Bhiwanian, World and Olympic bronze medallist Vijender Singh, dropped in to congratulate the new World champion from his famed district.

"I have been boxing since 2012 and my family has been supporting me. This medal means a lot to me," said Nitu, whose father Jai Bhagwan took unpaid leave from his job at the Chandigarh Vidhan Sabha for three years to support his daughter's training.

Nitu's road to glory, from being a two-time World youth champion to being a World champion at the elite level in less than six years, had its share of obstacles.

First, she went off the radar when a right shoulder issue in 2019 and the pandemic the following year disrupted her training. But she went back to coach Jagdish Singh of the well-known Bhiwani Boxing Club (BBC) to train alone before re-entering the competitive scene and winning the National title in 2021.

Gold medals at the prestigious Strandja Memorial event and the Commonwealth Games in 2022 established Nitu as a leading boxer in 48kg. She looked after herself before returning to action for the World championships this year.

Nitu showed some improvement as she could adapt her game according to her rival in the ring (evident from the mix of attacks and counterattacks she employed against Alua in the semifinals) on her way to becoming India's sixth World champion.

Bhatt, who was the chief coach of the National age group side when Nitu claimed two World youth titles in 2017 and 2018, highlights a rare quality of his ward.

"Nitu is a quick learner and works on command. Every boxer follows instructions during training, but Nitu does this even in the ring. Her eyes are always on the opponent and her ears open to the coaches who are seconding.

"In my coaching career of more than three decades, I have come across many boxers. But Nitu is the only one who follows 100 per cent of the instructions during a bout," says Bhatt.

Jagdish adds, "Nitu has come a long way – physically, technically and tactically. Her game sense, which is very important for a boxer's growth, has improved with experience. She has been quiet, cool, dedicated and disciplined.

"Her only low point came when she had the shoulder issue in 2019. But her family was very supportive. The physio she was working with and I also motivated her."

After contributing to the country's four-gold haul in the World championships – its best performance in 17 years – Nitu, like any other athlete, has the ambition of competing and achieving success in the Olympics.

However, the major roadblock for her is none other than two-time World champion Nikhat Zareen.

India's high performance director Bernard Dunne has said that the World champions in Olympic weights, Nikhat (50kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), will directly compete in the Asian Games – a qualifying event for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Bhatt and Jagdish have tried to make Nitu realise the reality.

"We have been speaking to her about this possibility [the uncertainty around getting a ticket to the Olympic qualifier] for the last one-and-a-half to two years," says Jagdish.

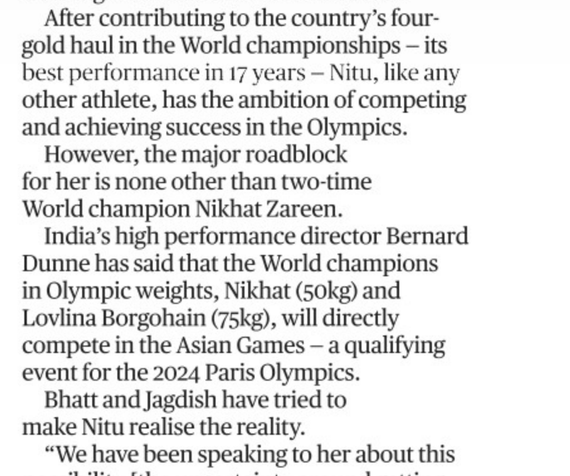
Bhatt adds, "Nikhat has given her all to reach where she is now. If Nikhat does not qualify in the Asian Games, then Nitu may get a chance. We ask Nitu to look forward. If she does not get a chance in 2024, then, I am sure, she will not let others take her spot in 2028."

Nitu understands that the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) is the final authority on selection matters. "In case we have a selection trial, I will be prepared for that," says Nitu.

Whether the 22-year-old gets to compete in Paris next year or not, she definitely has it in her to become an icon of Indian women's boxing.

"If Nitu stays away from injuries and distractions, no one can stop her," predicts Bhatt, with a sense of optimism.

For Nitu, her next goal is achieving excellence – fine-tuning her craft so she can continue emulating Magnificent Mary.



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>
> **NITU**

NITU GHANGHAS

> Nitu is a quick learner and works on command. Every boxer follows instructions during training, but Nitu does this even in the ring. Her eyes are always on the opponent and her ears open to the coaches who are seconding
>
> **BHASKAR BHATT**
> **Chief National coach**

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Novak Djokovic	35	7,160	16
2	Carlos Alcaraz	19	6,780	18
3	Stefanos Tsitsipas	24	5,770	21
4	Daniil Medvedev	27	5,150	23
5	Casper Ruud	24	5,005	24
6	Andrey Rublev	25	3,470	25
7	Felix Auger-Aliassime	22	3,450	27
8	Holger Rune	19	3,370	27
9	Jannik Sinner	21	3,345	20
10	Taylor Fritz	25	3,065	23
11	Karen Khachanov	26	2,855	23
12	Hubert Hurkacz	26	2,750	22
13	Cameron Norrie	27	2,735	23
14	Rafael Nadal	36	2,715	14
15	Frances Tiafoe	25	2,665	23

Top Indians ▸

Sumit Nagal
Rank 372 ▲ 2 spots

Mukund Sasikumar
Rank 388 ▲ 13 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Iga Swiatek	21	8,975	17
2	Aryna Sabalenka	24	6,945	19
3	Jessica Pegula	29	5,605	17
4	Caroline Garcia	29	4,990	23
5	Ons Jabeur	28	4,866	16
6	Coco Gauff	19	4,346	18
7	Elena Rybakina	23	4,305	22
8	Daria Kasatkina	25	3,375	24
9	Maria Sakkari	27	3,191	23
10	Petra Kvitova	33	3,162	18
11	Belinda Bencic	26	3,035	21
12	Barbora Krejcikova	27	2,443	19
13	Veronika Kudermetova	25	2,360	21
14	Beatriz Haddad Maia	26	2,276	25
15	Liudmila Samsonova	24	2,246	21

Top Indians ▸

Ankita Raina
Rank 241 ▼ 15 spots

Karman Thandi
Rank 269 ▲ 3 spots

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	29	23	3	3	70	27	43	72
2	Man. City	28	20	4	4	71	26	45	64
3	Newcastle	28	14	11	3	46	20	26	53
4	Man. United	28	16	5	7	42	37	5	53
5	Tottenham	29	15	5	9	53	41	12	50
6	Brighton	27	13	7	7	51	34	17	46
7	Aston Villa	29	13	5	11	39	40	-1	44
8	Liverpool	28	12	7	9	48	33	15	43
9	Brentford	29	10	13	6	46	38	8	43
10	Fulham	28	11	6	11	39	39	0	39
11	Chelsea	29	10	9	10	29	30	-1	39
12	Palace	29	7	9	13	24	39	-15	30
13	Leeds	29	7	8	14	38	49	-11	29
14	Wolves	29	7	7	15	23	42	-19	28
15	West Ham	28	7	6	15	26	39	-13	27
16	Everton	29	6	9	14	23	41	-18	27
17	Nott. Forest	29	6	9	14	24	52	-28	27
18	Bournemouth	29	7	6	16	27	57	-30	27
19	Leicester	29	7	4	18	40	51	-11	25
20	Southampton	29	6	5	18	23	47	-24	23

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	27	23	2	2	53	9	44	71
2	Real Madrid	27	18	5	4	57	21	36	59
3	Atletico Madrid	27	16	6	5	43	19	24	54
4	Real Sociedad	27	14	6	7	35	26	9	48
5	Real Betis	27	13	6	8	34	27	7	45
6	Villarreal	27	13	5	9	34	24	10	44
7	Athletic Bilbao	27	10	7	10	36	28	8	37
8	Rayo Vallecano	27	9	10	8	32	31	1	37
9	Osasuna	27	9	8	10	22	27	-5	35
10	Celta Vigo	27	9	8	10	34	37	-3	35
11	Girona	27	9	7	11	42	42	0	34
12	Real Mallorca	27	9	6	12	22	27	-5	33
13	Sevilla	27	8	7	12	31	42	-11	31
14	Getafe	27	7	9	11	27	34	-7	30
15	Cadiz	27	6	10	11	21	40	-19	28
16	Real Valladolid	27	8	4	15	20	44	-24	28
17	Valencia	27	7	6	14	29	32	-3	27
18	Espanyol	27	6	9	12	33	44	-11	27
19	Almeria	27	7	6	14	32	47	-15	27
20	Elche	27	2	7	18	19	55	-36	13

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Napoli	28	23	2	3	64	20	44	71
2	Lazio	28	16	7	5	44	19	25	55
3	AC Milan	28	15	6	7	48	36	12	51
4	Inter Milan	28	16	2	10	47	32	15	50
5	Roma	28	15	5	8	38	26	12	50
6	Atalanta	28	14	6	8	47	32	15	48
7	Juventus *	28	18	5	5	46	22	24	44
8	Bologna	28	11	7	10	36	36	0	40
9	Fiorentina	28	11	7	10	33	31	2	40
10	Torino	28	10	8	10	30	34	-4	38
11	Udinese	28	9	11	8	37	34	3	38
12	Sassuolo	28	10	7	11	36	41	-5	37
13	Monza	28	9	7	12	32	39	-7	34
14	Empoli	28	7	10	11	25	36	-11	31
15	Salernitana	28	6	10	12	32	48	-16	28
16	Lecce	28	6	9	13	24	33	-9	27
17	Spezia	28	5	10	13	24	44	-20	25
18	Verona	28	4	7	17	22	42	-20	19
19	Sampdoria	28	3	6	19	16	47	-31	15
20	Cremonese	28	1	10	17	23	52	-29	13

** 15 points deducted after investigation into club's past transfer dealings*

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Bayern	26	16	7	3	76	29	47	55
2	Dortmund	26	17	2	7	57	35	22	53
3	Union Berlin	26	15	6	5	41	28	13	51
4	SC Freiburg	26	13	8	5	39	35	4	47
5	RB Leipzig	26	13	6	7	49	33	16	45
6	Eint. Frankfurt	26	11	8	7	47	37	10	41
7	Leverkusen	26	12	4	10	48	40	8	40
8	Mainz	26	11	7	8	43	36	7	40
9	Wolfsburg	26	10	9	7	46	34	12	39
10	M'gladbach	26	8	8	10	40	44	-4	32
11	Werder	26	9	4	13	40	50	-10	31
12	FC Augsburg	26	8	5	13	34	47	-13	29
13	Cologne	26	6	10	10	33	44	-11	28
14	Bochum	26	8	2	16	28	57	-29	26
15	Hoffenheim	26	7	4	15	35	46	-11	25
16	Hertha Berlin	26	5	7	14	31	49	-18	22
17	Schalke	26	4	9	13	21	48	-27	21
18	Stuttgart	26	4	8	14	29	45	-16	20

Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Marnus Labuschagne	915	937
2	Kane Williamson	883	919
3	Steve Smith	872	947
4	Joe Root	871	923
5	Babar Azam	862	882
6	Travis Head	853	853
7	Usman Khawaja	815	815
8	Daryl Mitchell	792	800
9	Rishabh Pant	766	801
10	Dimuth Karunaratne	749	782

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	R. Ashwin	869	904
2	James Anderson	859	903
3	Pat Cummins	841	914
4	Kagiso Rabada	825	902
5	Shaheen Afridi	787	836
6	Ollie Robinson	785	820
7	Jasprit Bumrah	780	835
8	Nathan Lyon	757	774
9	Ravindra Jadeja	753	899
10	Kyle Jamieson	742	836

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	887	898
2	Rassie van der Dussen	777	796
3	Imam-ul-Haq	740	815
4	Shubman Gill	738	738
5	David Warner	726	880
6	Virat Kohli	719	911
7	Quinton de Kock	718	813
7	Rohit Sharma	707	885
9	Steve Smith	702	752
10	Fakhar Zaman	699	779

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Josh Hazlewood	705	733
2	Trent Boult	694	775
3	Mohammed Siraj	691	736
4	Mitchell Starc	686	783
5	Matt Henry	676	691
6	Rashid Khan	659	806
7	Adam Zampa	652	655
8	Shaheen Afridi	641	688
9	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	637	712
10	Shakib Al Hasan	636	717

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Suryakumar Yadav	906	910
2	Mohammad Rizwan	811	875
3	Devon Conway	760	831
4	Babar Azam	755	896
5	Aiden Markram	748	796
6	Rilee Rossouw	724	724
7	Muhammad Waseem	716	716
8	Dawid Malan	705	915
9	Aaron Finch	680	900
10	Jos Buttler	670	674

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	710	816
2	Wanindu Hasaranga	699	797
3	Fazalhaq Farooqi	692	692
4	Josh Hazlewood	690	806
5	Adil Rashid	684	746
6	Adam Zampa	678	743
7	Sam Curran	673	688
8	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	668	745
9	Anrich Nortje	667	695
10	Maheesh Theekshana	662	680

11 new medical colleges to come up under PPP model

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

Eleven more medical colleges will come up under Public-Private -Partnership (PPP) model in 11 districts of Karnataka.

The new medical colleges will be opened in Tumakuru, Davangere, Chitradurga, Bagalkot, Kolar, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Bengaluru Rural, Vijayapura, Vijayanagara and Ramanagaram.

The State government has already completed the process of site allotment and various clearances for two medical colleges. According to sources, two medical colleges will be made operational in Davanagere and Bengaluru Rural districts in the 2024-25 academic year.

Sujatha Rathod, Director for Directorate of Medical Education, told *The Hindu*, "To improve the medical infrastructure, health facilities for the rural people and giving more opportunity of medical education for the rural residents, and poor and meritorious students, the State government has decided to start 11 new medical colleges under PPP model in Karnataka.

"Site allotment and other clearances for Davanagere and Bengaluru Rural district medical colleges have been completed. We will look for stakeholders to run the colleges. In these two districts, medical colleges will be functional from the 2024-25 academic year."

As of now, Karnataka has a total of 57 medical colleges, including 23 run by the government. In 2014-15, the State government announced setting up of medical colleges in several districts. However, construction of the medical colleges in some districts could not be started owing to financial constraints. Setting up and running a medical college is a huge expense, which can go up to ₹600 crore.

According to the NITI Aayog, it is practically impossible for the Union and State governments to bridge the gaps in medical education with their limited resources. Therefore, the Aayog proposed to hand over district hospitals with 750 beds to private medical colleges through PPP model. The State government then decided to start new medical colleges under PPP model in 11 districts of Karnataka.

The State government will allot land to private firms for construction of the colleges. The firms will invest funds for the college building, infrastructure, teaching and non-teaching staff. Then the government will hand over the district hospital to the private firm for clinical practice. However, the district hospital staff will work under the Department of Health and Family Welfare of the State government.

HC declines to stay case against MLA

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has declined to stay a criminal case registered against Zameer Ahmed Khan, Congress MLA, on the charge of allegedly possessing disproportionate assets to the tune of ₹87.44 crore, which is said to be 2031% excess of his total income from all known sources of income. "At this stage the court cannot go into merits of the case, that is whether the investigating officer not considered the sale deed executed by the petitioner and receiving the sale consideration or not. Therefore, I am of the view, the further investigation against the petitioner cannot be stayed at this stage," said Justice K. Natarajan in his interim order passed on April 6.

It was contended on behalf of Mr. Zameer that the First Information Report (FIR) registered against him by the Lokayukta police was legally not maintainable.

It was argued on his behalf that the Lokayukta police had failed to follow the Supreme Court's guidelines on investigation in corruption cases, as the FIR was registered without collecting source report on the assets, placing the source report before the higher officer and obtaining permission for registration of FIR.

However, counsel for the Lokayukta police said that the information on disproportionate assets was received from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which is already probing a money laundering case against the MLA. The Lokayukta police, on verifying the information and documents received from the ED, found it fit to register a FIR and there was no need to get preliminary source report in this circumstance, counsel for the Lokayukta police contended.

The court said that the contentions raised on behalf of the MLA cannot be considered at this stage, and adjourned further hearing on the petition filed by Mr. Zameer questioning the legality of registration of FIR.

Spotlight
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UVCE fund crunch: After outrage, State government offers ₹35 crore

It also extends the status quo of UVCE's academic and administrative arrangement with Bangalore University for a year

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

University of Visvesvaraya College of Engineering in Bengaluru was a constituent college of Bangalore University since 1964. JAYANTH R.

After outrage from students, political parties and various public representatives, the Karnataka government has given the approval to release ₹35 crore to the University of Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE) in Bengaluru.

At the same time, the government has also extended the status quo of UVCE's academic and administrative arrangement with the Bangalore University for the next one year.

UVCE was a constituent college of Bangalore University since 1964. It became an autonomous institution on March 25, 2022.

Despite giving autonomous status to the UVCE, the government had not provided adequate funds for its operations. The capital and operational expenditure of the UVCE is around ₹47.69 crore per annum.

The Board of Governors (BoG) of the institution had submitted a proposal to the government seeking around ₹50 crore for the next academic year.

But, the government announced a grant of only ₹22.4 crore in the Budget, which was enough to cover the salaries of the regular faculty of the institution.

UVCE Teachers' Association wrote to Bangalore University seeking to maintain the status quo for one more year till March 31, 2023. But, the university rejected the appeal.

Due to the fund crunch, 69 teaching staff submitted a proposal to the government opting for Bangalore University instead of UVCE.

All these developments drew criticism from various quarters. Students protested against the government while teaching and non-teaching staff warned of an indefinite strike.

On April 3, the Finance Department relented. Officials gave approval to release ₹35 crore for the operations of UVCE.

In his order, the Joint Secretary for the Higher Education Department extended the status quo of UVCE with respect to Bangalore University till March 31, 2024.

UVCE principal H.N. Ramesh told *The Hindu*, "Government has given approval for adequate funds for the UVCE, and also extended the status quo with Bangalore University for one more academic year. It is a good sign from the government. We can now focus on academics and development of the institution."

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Questions of legitimacy swirl around the Nepo-Ding showdown in Astana

Neither Ian Nepomniachtchi nor Ding Liren can claim to be the world's best chess player. But with Magnus Carlsen abdicating his crown, the two have been forced into a difficult position: No. 2 vs. No. 3 for the sport's top prize – the World championship

GETTY IMAGES

IAN NEPOMNIACHTCHI

RAJEEV BHATT

DING LIREN

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Later this month, chess will have a new World champion – for the first time in a decade.

It will either be China's Ding Liren or Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi (playing under the flag of FIDE, chess' governing body, because of his country's suspension following its invasion of Ukraine). They are facing off in the title match at Astana, Kazakhstan's capital, from Sunday.

Neither, however, can claim to be the world's best. That position belongs to Magnus Carlsen, the World No. 1 since 2011. He won the World championship in 2013, dethroning Viswanathan Anand in the latter's hometown of Chennai. The Norwegian went on to defend his title in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021. He then got bored of winning World titles and abdicated his crown.

Carlsen was supposed to play Nepomniachtchi in the championship match. But after talks with FIDE, he announced last July that he would not defend his title. He had given indications even before that, saying he would only be tempted to play the 14-game championship series if his challenger were the Iran-born prodigy Alireza Firouzja, now a French citizen.

But Firouzja had a miserable Candidates tournament, finishing sixth in a field of eight. For the uninitiated, the World champion's challenger has to come through a Candidates cycle.

The 2022 edition of the Candidates, held in Madrid, was won by Nepomniachtchi in convincing fashion. He scored 9.5 points, remaining unbeaten, to earn the right to challenge Carlsen for the second successive time. The first time around, in 2021, he was crushed by the World champion – the last three games were not required.

Ding was a distant second at the Candidates, with eight points, but everyone knew that that position would matter, given the likelihood of Carlsen not defending the title. It was a fine effort by the Chinese player to edge above Hikaru Nakamura, Fabiano Caruana and Teimour Radjabov.

This is Ding's first title match. If he wins, he will become only the second undisputed male World champion from Asia (Anand was the first in 2000). He is ranked No. 3 in the world with 2788 Elo points (peak 2816 in November 2018); Nepomniachtchi is No. 2 with 2795, his career best. Ding is 30 and Nepomniachtchi 32. They are indeed evenly matched, and it could well be a close contest.

S.L. Narayanan, the World No. 78 who has faced Nepomniachtchi, believes the Russian may have an edge because of his experience of playing a World title match.

"The preparation for a World championship match would always be deep, with the 'seconds' doing a lot of research and that could come in handy for Nepomniachtchi," says the Thiruvananthapuram-based Grandmaster over the phone from Spain. "Of course, he didn't have a good time against Carlsen in that match, but, then, Carlsen is on a different level altogether."

True. Carlsen is the strongest player of all time. He is only 32 and shows no sign of slowing down. So a World championship that is played without him will lose some of its sheen.

Former World champion Garry Kasparov, who reigned from 1985 to 2000, has termed it "a kind of amputated event". He said the World title match should include the strongest player on the planet. "This match doesn't," the Russian legend said. "The match between Nepo and Ding is a great show, but it's not a World championship match."

This is not the first time the World chess championship has had to deal with the issue of legitimacy. In 1975, the Soviet Union's Anatoly Karpov became champion because Bobby Fischer, the American genius who revolutionised chess, refused to defend his title after FIDE did not agree to the changes he proposed to the match regulations. But as Kasparov pointed out, Fischer stopped playing chess, Carlsen hasn't.

Kasparov himself had broken away from FIDE and organised his own World championship. And there have been World champions – Alexander Khalifman, Ruslan Ponomariov and Rustam Kasimdzhanov – who were not recognised as such by most of the chess world.

"The issue of legitimacy is very much there with this World championship too," says Narayanan. "And I hope Carlsen will return to the World championship cycle at some stage. I feel Ding could be a worthy rival to Carlsen."

In 2019, Ding had, in fact, become the first player to defeat Carlsen in a match (a series of games between two players) since 2007, when he won the playoff of the Sinquefield Cup. But those games were played in the rapid and blitz format, not classical, which is the true test of a player's strength.

Ding and Nepomniachtchi may not be as strong as Carlsen – he has 2853 Elo points – but Narayanan will watch their match closely.

"Chess needs to keep this tradition of the World title match," he says. After all, it's a tradition that dates back to 1886, when Wilhelm Steinitz defeated Johannes Zukertort to become the first World champion.

> The issue of legitimacy is very much there with this World championship...[but] chess needs to keep this tradition of the World title match
>
> **S.L. NARAYANAN**
> GM, World No. 78

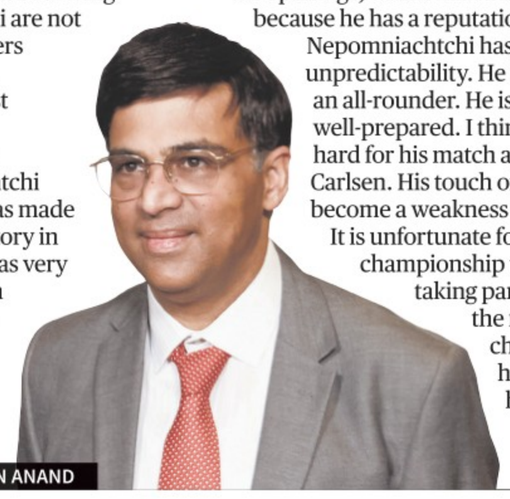
> I can hardly call it a World championship match. For me, the World championship match should include the strongest player on the planet, and this match doesn't
>
> **GARRY KASPAROV**
> Former World champion

Expert view: Anand on Nepo v Ding

It is going to be a very exciting World championship. I would say that both Ding Liren and Ian Nepomniachtchi are not only two of the strongest players but most interesting to watch as well. There is a nice contrast in styles, too. I think they are fairly equal in terms of ability.

I would favour Nepomniachtchi slightly because recently he has made dramatic progress and his victory in the Candidates tournament was very convincing. Ding played much less due to Covid restrictions.

Patience is one of Ding's strengths. He will give his all in every position. He is much more stable and has this ability to come up with good ideas in his openings, which is all the more remarkable because he has a reputation of working alone.



VISWANATHAN ANAND

Nepomniachtchi has a little bit of unpredictability. He is very much an all-rounder. He is also incredibly well-prepared. I think he trained hard for his match against Magnus Carlsen. His touch of genius can become a weakness sometimes.

It is unfortunate for the World championship that Carlsen is not taking part. As an impact, the first Chinese World champion could be historic and could have a dramatic effect on the game.

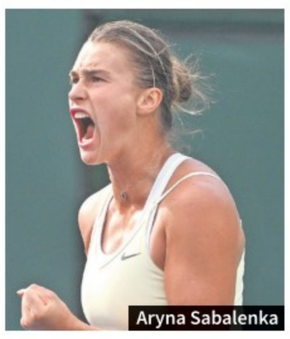
GAME THEORY

Quarterly review: WTA Tour ace leaders

Elena Rybakina tops the WTA Tour after the year's first quarter, serving the most aces and doing it with a better frequency (aces per match) than anybody else on the list of the 20 most prolific ace-servers.
She is also the only player to cross the 200-mark; six others have cranked out at least 100 aces so far this season

Elena Rybakina

Caroline Garcia



Aryna Sabalenka

Player	World ranking	Matches	Aces	Aces per match
Elena Rybakina	7	26	**224**	8.62
Caroline Garcia	4	27	**184**	6.81
Aryna Sabalenka	2	23	**154**	6.70
Qinwen Zheng	24	15	**124**	8.27
Liudmila Samsonova	15	16	**108**	6.75
Petra Kvitova	10	24	**107**	4.46
Maria Sakkari	9	26	**100**	3.85
Karolina Pliskova	16	18	**97**	5.39
Alycia Parks	56	11	**93**	8.45
Coco Gauff	6	20	**92**	4.60
Veronika Kudermetova	13	17	**92**	5.41
Petra Martic	34	19	**86**	4.53
Karolina Muchova	52	18	**84**	4.67
Donna Vekic	23	22	**79**	3.59
Belinda Bencic	11	23	**76**	3.30
Elise Mertens	29	20	**74**	3.70
Marta Kostyuk	39	21	**74**	3.52
Danielle Collins	40	18	**73**	4.06
Barbora Krejcikova	12	21	**70**	3.33
Rebecca Marino	82	11	**68**	6.18

SOURCE: WTA

PICTURE THIS

HARRY TRUMP/GETTY IMAGES

Rooks and hooks

Even as Ian Nepomniachtchi and Ding Liren battle for the World championship, here is something for fans who may like their chess with a side of violence: chess boxing!

It's a hybrid sport: players face off in alternating rounds of blitz chess and boxing until there is a winner by checkmate, knockout, time penalty (chess) or decision (boxing).

Matches are typically held in standard boxing rings, with the table, board and seating being moved in and out for each round.

The sport — especially popular in the streaming world, with minor celebrities and influencers putting their gloves and thinking caps on — reportedly has roots in pop culture.

The idea was portrayed in a 1970s kung fu movie titled 'Mystery of Chess Boxing'. Rap supergroup Wu-Tang Clan wrote a song about it in the early 1990s, roughly the same time as French artist Enki Bilal imagined it in comic-book form.

Dutch performance artist Iepe Rubingh adapted the concept and organised competitive matches, in which its appeal — the unique mix of mental manoeuvring and full-contact combat — became apparent. Don't try it at home, though; it requires training and medical supervision.

Timings
BENGALURU

SATURDAY, APR. 08	
RISE 06:12	SET 18:32
RISE 20:31	SET 07:32
SUNDAY, APR. 09	
RISE 06:11	SET 18:32
RISE 21:29	SET 08:16
MONDAY, APR. 10	
RISE 06:10	SET 18:32
RISE 22:28	SET 09:06

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	33	25
Mysuru	35	21
Bengaluru	34	23

Bengaluru Today
34°C The weather will be dry. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C A dry weather to continue. Morning will be pleasant with mist and haze. Day will be warm and humid. Night also will be pleasant.

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THE HINDU
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Remembering the Cross

Devotees attend a Good Friday service at St. Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Bengaluru on Friday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Demand fluctuations, quicker harvests change horticultural cultivation patterns

Experts say cultivation area has come down in recent years since farmers are now looking at crops which could immediately give them good yield

Cultivation area across Karnataka

Vegetable	2000-01	2010-11	2020-21
Potato	44,684	43,451	28,325
Brinjal	17,074	16,465	11,294
Carrot	5,415	4,886	4,833
Beans	15,699	12,271	12,893
Leafy vegetables	12,648	15,472	8,207

Fruit	2000-01	2010-11	2020-21
Sapota	20,216	28,909	8,441
Mosambi (sweet orange)	2,870	3,459	775
Jackfruit	7,855	5,421	2,803
Banana	53,377	87,238	1,34,311
Grapes	8,509	16,286	32,473

Area in hectares | Source: Horticulture Department

Jahnavi T.R.
BENGALURU

With agricultural patterns changing, cultivation areas of many horticultural crops in the State have reduced drastically in the last two decades.

According to data provided by the Horticulture Department, the cultivation area of sapota has come down from 20,216 hectares in 2000-01 to 8,441 hectares in 2020-21, while the potato cultivation area has reduced to 28,325 hectares in 2020-21, from 44,684 hectares in 2000-01.

The cultivation areas of other fruits like mosambi, jackfruit, and custard apple (sitaphal) have reduced in the last two decades.

However, the total cultivation area of fruits in Karnataka has increased in the last two decades. In 2000-01, fruits were being grown on 2,68,603 hectares while in 2010-11, it increased to 3,63,037 hectares. By 2020-21, the area touched 4,31,667 hectares.

On why the cultivation area of some of the most liked fruits has come down in the recent years, farmers and experts pointed out that farmers are now looking at crops which could immediately give them good yield and money, instead of spending years on a crop without any guarantee about the yield. "When farmers take their fruits to the market, sometimes the pricing is not good. The export of fruits has also reduced in recent years. The farmers cannot afford to wait for four to five years anymore. That is why the cultivation area of sapota, jackfruit, and such fruits must have come down," explained Kurubur Shanthakumar, farmers' leader.

He added that farmers are more inclined towards banana, sugarcane, and arecanut these days, as they can immediately get money. "The harvest comes in one year and there is also good prices in the market," he said.

An expert said that the limited demand for fruits could have resulted in farmers changing their mind about some fruits. "If you take sapota, for instance, it is mainly used only for pulp extraction. There are not many byproducts. Hence, its cultivation area might have dipped a little," said P.C. Tripathi, Prinicipal Scientist, Fruits Division, Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR).

Disease and poor seed quality have been listed as reasons for the reduction in the cultivation area of potato in the State. Now, with the apical root cutting (ARC) method being popularised and highly researched, farmers will get better yields, they said.

"Our farmers were highly dependent on potato seeds coming from Jalandhar and they were Generation 8 or Generation 10 seeds. But with ARC, Generation 0 and Generation 1 seeds will be available here and the cost will also come down drastically. The seeds will be of better quality and farmers will benefit. By 2025, we will be self-sufficient," said Rajender Kumar Kataria, Principal Secretary, Horticulture Department.

Speaking about other horticultural crops, he said: "While the cultivation areas of some fruits have decreased, those of others has increased. As it is used in a variety of purposes, the cultivation of grapes has increased, and owing to the new demand, dragon fruit, gooseberry, and litchi are also being cultivated now. Similarly, when it comes to vegetables, tomato, onion, and capsicum cultivation has been going up consistently."

Radio tracking study reveals greater predation risk for female katydids

A whistler male with radio tag attached.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Science researchers has revealed that female katydids (bush crickets) are at more risk than their male species and fall prey to their predator, the lesser false vampire bat.

In order to understand how katydids are hunted by their predator, a group of researchers led by Prof. Rohini Balakrishnan of the Centre for Ecological Sciences fitted tiny radio tags onto these insects and tracked their movement in the canopy.

They found that female katydids are at greater risk than males because the former are frequent fliers covering longer distances.

Prof. Balakrishnan and others in earlier studies had found that there were a lot more remnants of female wings than males at the roost of the bats, suggesting that they preferred to prey on female katydids.

To find out what made katydids females more attractive to the bats, the researchers, apart from field observation, carried out experiments in a controlled environment to answer key research questions on predator-prey interactions.

"One possibility is that bats can detect females more easily since they are usually larger than males. Second, female katydids might be more nutritious than males and therefore preferred by bats. To test these possibilities, the researchers focused on a group of katydids called "whistlers", in which females are almost double the size and weight of the males. They presented free-flying whistler females as well as males to bats in a large outdoor cage. Surprisingly, the bats approached both males and females with equal frequency. In fact, in this experimental setup, females escaped being captured more often than males. So, it was not the size or nutritive value of the females that increased the risk of their predation," said IISc.

Then the researchers hit on a third possibility. Perhaps the females were flying out more often. To test this, the team glued tiny radio transmitters onto the backs of male and female katydids and tracked them as they flew across trees. What they found was that females tend to move 1.5 times more frequently and 1.8 times farther than males. This led them to conclude that flying more frequently and travelling longer distances across trees may put females at a higher risk of being hunted by bats than males.

This study was published in *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* and is the first insect radio-tracking study in India.

ISRO completes two crucial tests for Gaganyaan mission

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed two key tests for Gaganyaan – the Human Space Flight Programme.

The space agency said that the final long-duration hot test of human-rated L110-G Vikas engine was successfully accomplished for the planned qualification duration of 240 seconds on April 6 at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri.

According to the space agency, the successful completion of this test marks a major milestone in the human space flight programme, Gaganyaan, of ISRO. The air-lit liquid core stage of human-rated launch vehicle (LVM3-G) uses two L110-G Vikas engines in clustered configuration. With this test, all the planned qualification tests of the engine have been completed successfully.

The Vikas engine uses storable propellants in a pump-fed gas generator cycle. Human rated Vikas engine has higher structural margins for sub-systems, improved assembly process and additional measurements for health monitoring. Human rated Vikas engine development hot tests were conducted in a step-by-step manner at Principal Test Stand, IPRC. Nine engines had undergone 14 hot tests with a cumulative duration of 1215 seconds, including four long-duration tests of 240 seconds each.

The crew module for the Gaganyaan programme.

ISRO added that it could complete the human-rated L110-G Vikas engine qualification within a relatively short span of three years.

Gaganyaan has got a bi-propellant-based propulsion system for providing 3-axis control (Pitch, Yaw & Roll) to crew module following service module separation during re-entry, i.e. from an altitude of 170 km to 7 km till deployment of the parachute-based deceleration system.

It also provides altitude control in the ascent phase abort, if any, from 3 km to 70 km.

On April 5, the hot test of the crew module propulsion system for demonstrating nominal re-entry for the duration of 650 seconds was successfully conducted at ISRO Propulsion Complex, Mahendragiri. Prior to this, a series of tests were carried out with six thrusters.

Completing this test is a major step in qualifying the Crew Module Propulsion System for the Gaganyaan programme.

Woman in inter-caste marriage harassed by her in-laws in Hassan

The Hindu Bureau
HASSAN

A woman, who had an inter-caste marriage, has alleged that members of her husband's family harassed her, citing her caste. She has filed a complaint with the Women's Police Station against her husband's parents, sisters, and brother. Divya, in her complaint to the police, said she and Pruthviraj of Shantinagar in the city were in love. When he refused to marry her, she went and told his parents about their relationship.

The parents sent her out, stating that they were not in favour of their marriage because she belonged to a "lower caste". However, they agreed to the marriage as she approached the police. The couple got married at a temple in February 2022. Even after the marriage, they continued to harass her and demanded that she clear the family's loan of ₹15 lakh.

They threatened her that they would get Pruthvi married to another girl from their caste. They had not allowed her to talk to Pruthviraj. The Women's Police Station has registered the complaint.

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₹3.94 crore spent on buses to bring people for airport inauguration

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Around ₹3.94 crore was spent for bringing people in 1,600 Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) buses for the inauguration of the Shivamogga airport at Sogane.

This information was obtained through an RTI petition filed by a citizen. The RTI reply states that the money for hiring these buses on contract basis was paid by an 'executive engineer' of Shivamogga district.

The lotus shaped airport at Sogane was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 27 amid much fanfare.

Akash Patil, who had sought the information through an RTI query, shared the reply received from KSRTC's Shivamogga division on social media.

The reply states: "On February 27, to bring people to the city of Shivamogga from various taluks of the district for the inauguration of the airport, the Corporation had provided 1,600 buses on a contractual basis. The total bill for the buses was ₹3,93,92,565, and it was paid by executive engineer, Shivamogga."

The inaugural event was reportedly attended by around one lakh people. The district administration had put up a pandal, and offered lunch and transport facilities to visitors.

AAP trying to make a mark in State amidst crises

It contested the previous elections but has not been able to open its account so far; party announced it would field candidates in all 224 Assembly constituencies this time

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP's Karnataka convener Prithvi Reddy at a public meeting in Davangere on March 4. PTI

While the main Opposition parties, the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka, continue to stress the need to take on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for upcoming Assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party is battling multiple issues as it works on its prospects in the State.

The party in power in Delhi and Punjab has been a minor player in Karnataka. It contested the previous elections but has not been able to open its account so far. However, it announced that it would fight in all 224 Assembly constituencies across the State this time.

On March 4, the AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal, held the party's maiden public meeting in Davangere and promised free electricity, good education in government schools, and good healthcare if they come to power.

After this, the party started its groundwork in the State.

The party is solely dependent on Mr. Kejriwal and the various development models in Delhi. A day before he came to Karnataka, retired IPS officer Bhaskar Rao, who was in AAP, joined the ruling BJP on March 1. Mr. Rao had taken voluntary retirement in 2022 and joined the AAP.

However, party sources said the development has not impacted the AAP in Karnataka. "There is no impact from Mr. Rao quitting the party or the allegation of a lack of prominent face in the party. We have a very good development model in Delhi and now in Punjab," a source said.

After joining the BJP, Mr. Rao had alleged that though he was associated with the AAP for about a year, he felt that the party did not have the capability to grow in Karnataka. He described the BJP as the only party that can protect the integrity of the country.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, AAP Bengaluru president Mohan Dasari said, "The party has given good governance in both Delhi and Punjab with high-quality education, healthcare, and good governance; the same will be implemented in the State. We will make a big difference in this election by contesting all the seats since people want change, especially from the corrupt governments that ruled Karnataka."

Karnataka Votes 2023

AAP's Karnataka convener Prithvi Reddy said the other political parties in the State had completely failed to meet the expectations of the people, and there was no development by the government, especially in the health and education sectors. The AAP would start alternative ideas on the lines of the Delhi model of governance in Karnataka.

Meanwhile, the party is also worried about the arrest of the former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the excise policy case. A source said that the arrest would have an impact on the party but added that everyone knows that it is a "politically motivated" arrest.

Shrugging off the obstacles, the party has taken up various initiatives with hopes of emerging as an important political party in the State. It conducted 'Gram Sampark Abhiyaan' to expand the network of the party at the grassroots level across the State. The party has added 10 frontal organisations, of women, youth, OBC, SC/ST, traders, farmers and professional wings to its Karnataka unit.

140 candidates

Recently, the party has announced tickets for 140 candidates, including Supreme Court lawyer Brijesh Kalappa (Chickpet), former KAS officer K. Mathai (Shantinagar), Kannada actor Tennis Krishna (Turuvekere), AAP Bengaluru president Mohan Dasari (C.V. Raman Nagar), and AAP co-convener Shanthala Damle (Mahalakshmi Layout).

Mr. Reddy said, "All our candidates represent various sections of society, and 50% of them are aged below 45. We have selected them after conducting a survey. Candidates selected represent farmers, youth, women, advocates, doctors, IT professionals and other backgrounds."

Woman found dead

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A homemaker was found dead and the police suspect that she had a trivial row after her husband failed to get her a chocolate. The deceased has been identified as Nandini, 30, a resident of Sonnappa Layout, near Hennur.

According to the police, the incident occurred on Thursday. The couple allegedly had a fight, when she took objection to her husband not getting her a chocolate, after which he left for work. The couple's two children had gone to school, leaving Ms. Nandini alone at home.

When her husband tried calling her from work on Thursday afternoon, she did not answer. He alerted a neighbour, who went to their house and found her dead. She was rushed to a private hospital, but was declared brought dead.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Clients – Mrs.Masooda and Mrs.Yasmeen Iftaqar are the absolute owners in possession of the Schedule-Property, the Public are hereby put on notice to not to deal with the Schedule-Property with any third party claiming to be the owner of the Schedule-Property.

SCHEDULE-PROPERTY

All that is of the piece and parcel of agricultural dry land bearing Sy. No. 101/P1, New Sy. No. 101, measuring 0.18 Guntas, situated at Byappanahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District, bounded on:- **East by:** Private Property; **West by:** Sy. No. 114/3; **North by:** Sy. No. 100 **South by:** Remaining portion of same Sy. No. 101/P1.

K.KIRAN KUMAR
Advocate
Mob : 9844875328

Place: Bengaluru
Date : 06.04.23

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sri Narayanaswamy C. S/o. late Sri Chikkanjanappa r/a Ivarakandapura village, Heasaghatta Hobli, Yelhanka Taluk, Bangalore seeking loan from Can Fin Homes Ltd., Sompura branch, Bangalore for the purpose of house construction on the security schedule property representing that the original sale deed dated 01.02.2010 executed by Sri Kemparaju and others to Smt. H.A.Shashikala regd. as document No.2285/2009-10, B-1, CD No.HSRD39, Hesaraghatta, Bangalore was lost. Notice hereby given to general public calling upon them to file objections with undersigned if any for creation of mortgage of the schedule property to the said Can Fin Homes Ltd. within **SEVEN days** from this day, failing which mortgage will be created for the loan amount.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing **Site no.65,** Gramatana Khata No. 20/1/20/3, **Tarabanahalli village, Huralichikkanahalli grama panchayat, Bangalore North Taluk,** measuring east to west 40 ft. and north to south 30 ft. in total **1200 sq. ft.** and bounded as follows:

East by : 25 feet Road
West by : Private property
North by : Site No.66
South by : Site No.64.

B. Gopalakrishna Adiga,
Advocate, No.616, 1st Floor 2nd Main Kommaghatta Road, Kengeri Satellite Town, Bangalore-560060
Place: Bangalore **Date:** 06/04/2023

LOST & FOUND

We, **JABEEN** W/o Mohammed Vaseem Shaikh, & **MOHAMMED VASEEM SHAIKH** S/o Mohammed Rashid Shaik, both residing at No-29, K.G.Halli, Near Inam Masjid, HBR Layout, Bangalore-45,
We have lost our Original registered Sale deed document No-GAN-1-00911-2022-23, C.D.No-GAND1187, Dated:17-05-2022 & we have filed a Lost complaint to Bangalore City Police on Dated:16-03-2023, the Lost Report No-0502752/2023. If anybody found or have any claim
Contact: Smt. JABEEN & Mr. MOHAMMED VASEEM SHAIKH M-7975922697

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that my client/s is/are intending to purchase the schedule property from its owner Smt.B S Parvatha, Wife of Late. K N Papegowda, aged about 70 years, residing at No: 46, Bharath Nagar, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore-560097, PAN: BACPP3833A/ AADHAAR: 3418 5725 6331

Any person, having any claim over the schedule property claiming through the predecessors in title or any other person/s, may lodge their objections or claims, in writing with all supporting documentary evidence by registered post with regard to such claim with the undersigned within 10 (ten) days hereof, failing which my client/s will proceed to conclude the Sale Transaction. Any claims lodged thereafter will not be entertained by my client/s;

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of vacant site bearing Municipal No.946 (carved out of land in Sy.No.2/2, 2/3, 28/2, 29, 30/1, 12/6 to 12/9, 13/1, 13/5, 14/7 to 14/9, situated at N S Palya, Taverekere Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore) now presently situated at Mico Employees Griha Nirmana Sangha Layout, Bangalore, Ward No.176-BTM Layout (old ward no.65), PID No.65-94-946 and bounded on the :

East by : Property bearing No.969;
West by : Road;
North by : Property bearing No.945;
South by : Property bearing No.947;
Measuring: East to West: 18.29 meters;
North to South: 12.50 meters;
In all admeasuring 228.63 Square meters;

N S SATYANARAYANA GUPTA
K S NAYAK, N S RACHANA
N C JANARDHAN, Advocates
Rachana Law Associates
"Lakshmideep", I Floor, No:2980, 17th Cross, Banashankari II Stage, BANGALORE – 560 070 PH : 9731810810
Date : 07-04-2023

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby notified that, our client Sri.Kiran Kumar.B.V, is the sole and absolute owner of the schedule property. Any person/s, having any manner of claim over the Schedule Property may lodge his/her/their/its objections or claims in writing with all supporting documentary evidence with regard to such claims with the undersigned within 07 days hereof, failing which, our client will continue to hold, own possess and enjoy the same as an absolute owner of the same. Any objections/claims received thereafter will not be entertained/binding on our client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All the piece & parcel of immovable property bearing Northern side of the property in Western Portion bearing Site No.81, formed in Sy.No.36/2, situated at Vidhyapeeta Revenue Badavane, 4th 'A' Cross, Yadiyuru Nagasandra Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, measuring East-West: 15 ft.(including 4 Feet Common Passage)and North to South:50 ft. in all totally measuring 750 Square Feet together with 1 Square ACC Roofed house constructed thereon, and same is bounded on the:-

East by:- 4ft.Common passage and then Eastern Portion of Site No.81,
West by:- Site No.82,
North by:- Road,
South by:- Remaining Portion of Same site Number.

SURESHA, Advocate
No.20, Ananda Nilayam 2nd Floor, 1st Cross, 4th main, Obalappa Garden, K R Road, Bangalore - 560070
Mobile No : 98860 61409, 94499 74935

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the general public that we are examining the title of 24/7 Customer Private Limited (**24/7**) (CIN U72200KA2000PTC026694, PAN. AAACZ1014A), a private limited company registered under the provisions of Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at Prestige Tech Platina-2, Survey No. 32/1, 32/2, 34/1, 34/2, 34/3 and 34/4, Kadubeesanahalli, Varthur Hobli, Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru – 560087 in relation to the immovable property, more fully described in the **SCHEDULE** shown below and hereinafter collectively referred to as "**Property**"

It is informed that our client is intending to purchase the Property or portion thereof from the said 24/7 and if any person/s, entity, firm, institution (corporate or otherwise) is having any claim/s, any right, title, interest, pending litigation or demand of any nature in or upon the Property or any part thereof and/or against 24/7 that may have bearing on the proposed purchase, the same may be brought to the notice of the undersigned in writing together with all details of the right, title, interest, claim, pending litigation or demand made, together with supporting documents, within fifteen (15) days from the date of this notice. Failing to do so, it shall be presumed that the ownership and title of 24/7 in relation to the Property is clear, marketable and free from encumbrance/s of any kind whatsoever and no other person has any right, title or interest of any nature whatsoever in the Property or any part thereof, and our client will then proceed to complete their proposed transaction with respect to the Property. Further, claims or alleged interests, if any, which are not received within fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this notice shall be deemed to have been consciously waived and disregarded for all intents and purposes and shall thereafter not be binding on our client.

SCHEDULE

The office building identified as Building 2 comprising of lower basement, upper basement, ground floor plus 12 upper floors bearing Khata Nos. 380/101 to 380/1301 having total super built up area of 4,57,085 square feet together with 768 car parking spaces, forming part of the larger development known as Prestige Tech Platina Park and bounded as under:

East by : Building No. 1 in Prestige Tech Platina;
West by : Building No. 3 in Prestige Tech Platina;
North by : Bellandur Ammani Village boundary; and
South by : Opens towards Private Property

Together with 1,58,828 square feet of undivided right, title and interest in the land admeasuring 8 acres 28 ½ guntas comprised of lands bearing Survey Nos. 32/1, 32/2, 34/1, 34/2, 34/3, and 34/4, all situated at Kadubeesanahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk along with other utilities including cricket pitch, basketball court and amphitheater with common services and facilities, and all rights of easements, latent or patent, enjoyed or reputed to be enjoyed in connection with Building including the right of way through the internal roads of Prestige Tech Platina Park.

Date : 08/04/2023
Place : Bengaluru

Mridul Kumbalath
Partner
Trilegal
Advocates & Solicitors
Prestige Poseidon
139, Residency Road
Bengaluru – 560 025
T: 080 4343 4646
Email: mridul.kumbalath@trilegal.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that our client intends to purchase the immovable property more particularly described in the Schedule written hereunder and referred to as 'Schedule Property' from its present owners (1) Sri. Subbarao Telidevara and (2) Smt. Shobhana Krishnaswamy, residing at A-403, Adarsh Residency, 47th Cross, 8th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru – 560 070 (hereinafter referred to as 'Owners'), who have represented to our client that they are the joint and lawful owners of the schedule property having unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Notice is hereby given to the general public that if any person/s, entity/ies, company/ies, firm/s, institution/s has/ have claims any right, title, interest, pending litigation, tenancy, mortgage, charge, lien or demand and/or any other interest of whatsoever nature in or upon the schedule property or any part thereof, the same may be brought to the notice of the undersigned in writing together with all details and documents in support of the such claim within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of this notice, failing which , it shall be deemed that the owner has clear and marketable title to the schedule property and that no one else has any right, title, interest or claim whatsoever in respect of the schedule property and our client would be at liberty to proceed with intended transaction of acquisition of the schedule property. Any objections and/or claims received after the expiry of the period mentioned above shall neither be entertained nor be binding on our client.

Schedule Property

All that piece and parcel of a Villa bearing No. 145, having a super built up area of 4245 sq. ft. and land area of 6300 sq. ft. at "Adarsh Palm Retreat – Villas", formed on properties bearing Khata No. 143 in Sy. Nos. 90, 91/2, 92/1, 92/2, 92/3, 110 and 111, situated at Bhoganahalli Village, Varthur Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk (earlier Bengaluru South Taluk) and bounded as follows:

East by : Remaining portion of Sy. Nos. 111, 90, 92/3 & 91/2.
West by : Remaining portion of Sy. Nos. 110, 92/1 & 91/2.
North by : Road.
South by : Remaining portion of Sy. No. 91/2 & Doddakannelli Village Boundary.

Poornachandra B.Pattar, Partner
M/s. Spectrum Legal
No. 101, 1st Floor, 30/A, Promenade Road Next to Punjab National Bank, Bengaluru-560005, Ph : 080-48508728

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, MR. SHARAT. M. REDDY s/o Late. C. M. Reddy is the absolute owner of the property described in the Schedule hereunder.

It is brought to the notice of the general public that, our client has negotiated and decided to purchase the Schedule Property from the above said owner. All persons having any claim against or to the Schedule Property or any part thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to Sell, G.P.A, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange, possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office as shown below **within 10 days from the date of publication hereof**, failing which our client shall proceed without any reference to such claim and the same, if any, will be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the **Site No. 64, Bommanahalli CMC Khata No. 73, New Municipal No. 78/77/73/16/20/64,** measuring **East to West 30 feet** and **North to South 40 feet** in all measuring **1200 Sq. feet** formed in **Sy. No. 16/20**, situated at Yellukunte Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore Urban District and bounded on:

East by : Road; **West by :** Site No. 65;
North by : Road; **South by:** Site No. 79;
Dated this 08th day of April 2023 at Bangalore

M/S. LEGAL NEXUS,
ADVOCATES & CONSULTANTS,
No.428, First Floor, 25th Cross, 24th Main HSR Layout, Sector 2, Bangalore-560102.
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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMADI D K, D/o Abdul Khayyum, R/at No.15/2, 4th A Cross, R A Road, Ejipura, Bangalore-560047, have changed my name from Mohammadi D K to Hira vide affidavit dtd: 06-04-2023 before Notary K.V. Mani, Bengaluru.

I, TRISHAL Prabhakara Reddy, W/o Lohitesh K.S, R/at No. 2250, 15th C Cross, 22nd B Main, 1st Sector, HSR Layout, Bengaluru-560102 have changed my name to Trishala Prabhakara Reddy vide affidavit dt: 06-04-2023 before Notary Sivakumara M.N, Bengaluru.

I, MOHAMMED Kabir, S/o. Shaik Nasrulla, residing at Thopkhan Mohalla, Ward No.13, Ramanagaram Towm, Ramanagaram District - 562159 Karnataka state, today camping at Bengaluru, have changed my name to Mohammed Kabeer vide Affidavit dated 06.04.2023 sworn before Notary D.Guna Shekar, Bangalore.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ARSHIYA Kausar Jabbar, R/at No.16/2, 1st Floor, 3rd Cross, Dr. TCM Royan Road, Siddharth Nagar, Bengaluru-560053 have changed my name to Arshiya Kausar vide affidavit dt: 13-03-2023 before Notary Y. R. Chandrasekar, Bangalore.

I, VISHAL Kumar Gupta, S/o. Lakshmi Prasad, residing at Sai Purvi Symphony, B1304, Gunjur VIllage, Gunjur Road, Varthur Hobli, Gunjur Post, Bengaluru - 560087 have changed my name to Vishal Gupta vide Affidavit dated 06.04.2023 sworn before Notary D.Guna Shekar, Bangalore.

I Amit Kumar Singh S/o Narendra Pratap Singh, residing at C 505 Nitesh Hyde Park, Doddakamanahalli Main Road, Near Sos Village, Hulimavu, Bengaluru, Karnataka - 560076, have changed the name of minor Son Kushagra Singh aged 12 years and he shall hereafter be known as Aryaditya Solanki for all purposes in future.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VENKATESHA SRINIVASA MURTHY, S/o. Late Srinivasamurthy, Aged about 40 years, R/at No. 8, 'Anjanadri', 5th Main Road, Bhyraveshwaranagara, Bangalore - 560 072, do hereby declare that I have changed my daughter's name from **PUJYA** to **PUJYA VENKATESHA MURTHY** vide affidavit dated 31.03.2023 sworn to before K. Gunde Gowda, Advocate & Notary Public, Government of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VENKATESHA SRINIVASA MURTHY, S/o. Late Srinivasamurthy, Aged about 40 years, R/at No. 8, 'Anjanadri', 5th Main Road, Bhyraveshwaranagara, Bangalore - 560 072, do hereby declare that I have changed my daughter's name from **PURVI** to **PURVI VENKATESHA MURTHY** vide affidavit dated 31.03.2023 sworn to before K. Gunde Gowda, Advocate & Notary Public, Government of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VENKATESHA SRINIVASA MURTHY, S/o. Late Srinivasamurthy, Aged about 40 years, R/at No. 8, 'Anjanadri', 5th Main Road, Bhyraveshwaranagara, Bangalore - 560 072, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **VENKATESHA MURTHY KANAKAPURA SRINIVASAMURTHY** to **VENKATESHA SRINIVASA MURTHY** vide affidavit dated 31.03.2023 sworn to before K. Gunde Gowda, Advocate & Notary Public, Government of India, Bengaluru.

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HON'BLE Vth ADDL. FAMILY COURT JUDGE AT BANGALORE.
Family Courts, Nyaya Degula, Siddaiah Road, Bangalore.
G & Wc. No.102 of 2023

PETITIONERS:1) Mrs. SUCHITRA MECQUIN, Aged about 44 Years; W/o. Late Mecquin Vinod Kumar,
2) Master ETHAN ARYEH, Aged about 11 years, Son of Late Mecquin Vinod Kumar,
(Minor Master ETHAN ARYEH, represented herein by Mother and Natural Guardian Mrs. SUCHITRA MECQUIN.)
Petitioners 1 & 2 Residing at:
No.2J, Sycon, Horamavu Apartment, Horamavu Main Road, Bangalore-560043.
RESPONDENT/s: NIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

WHEREAS the petitioners have approached THE HON'BLE 5th ADDL. FAMILY COURT JUDGE AT BANGALORE in G & Wc No. 102/ 2023 seeking the indulgence of the Hon'ble 5th Addl. Family Judge, to appoint the 1st Petitioner as the NATURAL GUARDIAN to her son the 2nd Petitioner above named.

WHEREAS any person or body opposed to the same may file their objections by appearing before THE HON'BLE 5th ADDL. FAMILY COURT JUDGE AT BANGALORE in person or by pleader on the **9th day of June, 2023** failing which the Hon'ble Court will be pleased to cause issue of the "Natural Guardian Certificate" in favor of the 1st Petitioner.

Given under my hand and seal of this court on 20-3-2023.

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Senior Sheristedar
Family Court, Bengaluru

ALTAF HASAN, Advocate for Petitioners
No.60, G-3, Ground Floor, M.M.Complex, Chikka Bazaar Street, Tasker Town, Shivajinagar, Bangalore-051; Mob. No 7892117565

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE SMALL CAUSES JUDGE AT BANGALORE (SCCH-19)
S.C. NO. 15026/2023

Between
ICICI Bank Limited,
Having its Registered office at Landmark, Race Course Circle, Vadodara - 390 007 and having its Corporate office at ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400 051 and its branch office at Mytree Centre, 4/10, Hosur Road, Bommanahalli, Bangalore - 560 068
Represented by its POA Holder Sri. Pramodh Gurumallappa ...Plaintiff
And
Sri. Indira Singh Patliya ...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT

To,
Sri. Indira Singh Patliya,
S/o Sri. Lal Singh Patliya,
Aged about 33 years,
No. 24 Bar, No. 263, 102, 3rd Cross, Near Celebrity Paradise, Valankani Electronic City, Bangalore - 560 100

WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of Rs.1,61,421/- (Rupees One Lakh Sixty One Thousand Four Hundred Twenty One Only) together with interest @ 24% p.a., cost of the suit and to grant such other or further order relief. The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble Small Causes Judge (SCCH-19) in person or through a Counsel who can able to answer the claim made against you on 21/04/23 at 11:00 a.m. failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte.

Given under my Hand and Seal of the Court on this 18th day of March, 2023.

BY ORDER OF THE HON'BLE COURT DEPUTY REGISTRAR, SMALL CAUSES COURT, MAYOHALL UNIT, BANGALORE

ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF
SA Associates,
No. 10, 7th Cross,
Victoria Layout,
Bangalore - 560 047

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NEHA D/o. Ashok Anand, R/at D707, Kolte Patil, Bang–43, have changed my name from NEEHA to NEHA for all future purposes by affidavit dated 04–04–2023, sworn before the Notary Uday Kumar.

NAME CHANGE. I, Bhagyashree S W/O R Venkatesh padaki door no. CH 5, 2ND Main, saraswathipuram Mysuru–570009 have changed my name to SANDHYA PADAKI for all future purposes. Hereafter i request my family and friends to designate and address my name as SANDHYA PADAKI.

I, RANJANA Bawji Patel, W/o Sunny Suresh Balmiki, R/o A S Dreams Apartments, B Wing, 6th Floor, Pent House, 13th Main, 17th Cross, Viratnagar, Bangalore-560068 have changed my name from Ranjana Bawji Patel to Ranjana Sunny Balmiki vide affidavit dt : 28-03-2023 before Notary K.V.Mani, Bengaluru.

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDL. CITY CIVIL JUDGE MAYOHALL UNIT AT BANGALORE (CCH-20)
O.S. NO. 26791/2022

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ICICI Bank Limited,
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Represented by its POA Holder Sri. Pramodh Gurumallappa ...Plaintiff
And
Smt. Savitha Murali ...Defendant

SUMMONS TO DEFENDANT

To,
Smt. Savitha Murali,
W/o Sri. Muruli Babu, Aged about 45 years, No. 201, 2nd Floor, Maruthi Enclave, 1st Main, 7th Cross, Munianjappa Layout, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bangalore - 560 016

WHEREAS the Plaintiff has instituted above said suit against you for recovery of **Rs. 9,26,093/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Ninety Three Only)** together with interest @ 24% p.a., cost of the suit and to grant such other or further order relief. The above mentioned Defendant hereby summoned to appear before the Hon'ble 26th Additional City Civil & Sessions Judge (CCH - 20) in person or through a Counsel who can able to answer the claim made against you on 13.06.2023 at 11.00 a.m. failing which the suit is heard and disposed ex-parte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Hon'ble Court on this 25/03/2023.

BY ORDER OF THE HON'BLE COURT DEPUTY REGISTRAR, CITY CIVIL COURT, MAYOHALL UNIT, BANGALORE

ADVOCATE FOR PLAINTIFF
S A Associates,
No. 10, 7th Cross, Victoria Layout, Bangalore- 560 047

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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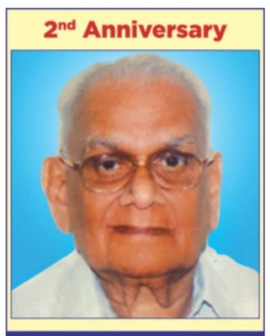
2nd Anniversary



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THE HINDU

A boost to the housing sector

Real estate experts welcome RBI's decision to keep the repo rate steady

The RBI's decision to keep the repo rate steady has been welcomed by experts in the real estate sector. They consider it as relevant to the present scenario.

Boman Irani, President-elect, CREDAI National, says "We laud the RBI for maintaining the repo rate. It's a move that is bound to go a long way in sustaining the sales momentum that we've witnessed in the residential segment. Given the potential adverse impact of a hike in repo rate and its ripple effect on both housing demand and supply, we, at CREDAI, welcome the central bank's decision. This move would provide a further boost to the affordable and mid-income

housing segments, in particular. Coupled with the Central government also hiking its outlay for the PMAY programme during this year's Budget, we expect the demand for affordable housing to grow in the upcoming quarters.

According to Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India CBRE, the RBI's decision to keep the repo rate stable is a surprise move, done with the view to the withdrawal of accommodation while keeping a close eye on inflation. The move is highly encouraging for the infrastructure, housing, and other real estate segments as this decision, for now, allays fears of a further increase in financial burden on developers and borrowers. With the borrowing cost expected to remain largely stable, the overall growth momentum will get a fresh impetus. The RBI has taken an extremely balanced view of containing inflation and managing external volatilities over the past year.

Piyush Gupta, MD, Capital Markets & Investment Services at Colliers India, says that after six consecutive hikes, the RBI decision to pause on further increase in rates is a welcome move. With inflationary pressures now taming down, this will bring back focus on growth, credit offtake, consumer spending, real estate, infrastructure and specifically housing sector demand.

'Growth momentum will be sustained'

Shishir Baijal, Chairman & Managing Director, Knight Frank India, says it's a welcome move by the RBI. The consumer inflation has sustained above the RBI's upper threshold of 6% and is more likely to remain sticky in the next few months following the recent crude oil production cut by the OPEC countries and Russia. Consumer inflation arising from such events is beyond the central bank's control. Any further hike in the repo rate and lending rates along with sustained inflation could potentially reduce the spending capacity of the consumers which in turn can dampen India's economic growth. Therefore, the RBI's decision to pause its rate hike cycle is supportive of economic growth.

From a real estate market perspective, the sector has weathered multiple home loan interest rate increases from a low of 6.5% to 8.75%, supported by favourable house purchase affordability and the strong desire towards home ownership. Therefore, a pause in any further rise in the lending rates should support the existing growth momentum in the housing sector.

'Encouraging sign'

According to Vimal Nadar, Head, Research, Colliers India, the RBI decision is an encouraging sign. The unchanged repo rate is likely to give some breather to homebuyers as the RBI has raised the repo rate by 250 basis points since May 2022, thereby pushing up interest rates for homebuyers to 9.5% and above. Given the expected nominal growth in income levels paired with sturdy prices in a cautious economic environment, RBI has taken a much-needed step to boost real estate sentiment.

Amit Goyal, CEO, India Sotheby's International Realty, says the RBI decision is good news for home buyers. Rising home loan interest rates has become a growing concern for homebuyers and supply-side stakeholders. To some extent the higher home loan interest rates have dampened the demand for affordable and mid-segment housing.While the luxury and high-end segments have not been significantly impacted yet, further increases could have affected the overall industry.

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INBRIEF

Election Commission's seizures cross ₹93 crore

Since March 29, when the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into force in Karnataka, the Election Commission (EC) has made seizures totalling ₹93.4 crore, including cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals. This includes ₹15.12 crore seized in the last 24 hours.

The EC seized cash and articles worth nearly ₹58 crore even before the elections were announced (from March 9 to 27).

In the last 24 hours, the Special Surveillance Teams and Income Tax Department have seized cash totalling ₹4.71 crore in Anekal constituency in Bengaluru, gold worth ₹2.66 crore in Bagepalli constituency and worth ₹2.15 crore in Padmanabhanagar constituency in Bengaluru, and silver worth ₹ 1.05 crore in Aurad constituency, said a release from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer on Friday..

R. Dhruvanarayan's wife passes away

Veena Dhruvanarayan, 51, wife of late KPCC working president and former MP late R. Dhruvanarayan, passed away at a private hospital in Mysuru on Friday.

She was ailing for some time and her demise comes less than a month of Dhruvanarayan's death, who passed away following a heart attack on March 11. They have two sons one of whom is Darshan Dhruvanarayan, who has been fielded by the Congress to contest from the Nanjangud constituency in the Assembly elections.

Senior Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, AICC president M. Mallikarjun Kharge, KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar, former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and others commiserated with Mr. Darshan Dhruvanarayan over the phone. The last rites are scheduled to be held at Heggavadi village in Chamarajanagar district on Saturday.

JD(S) unlikely to field candidate in Nanjangud

The JD(S) is unlikely to field a candidate in the Nanjangud Assembly segment in the coming elections. This comes in the light of death of Veena Dhruvanarayan, wife of Congress leader R. Dhruvanarayan who passed away on March 11, on Friday and the Congress fielding their son Darshan Dhruvanarayan as its candidate from Nanjangud.

After paying respects to Ms. Veena Dhruvanarayan, JD(S) leader G.T. Deve Gowda said he and party leader H.D. Kumaraswamy had discussed whether or not the party should field a candidate in Nanjangud in view of the present circumstances. "Only yesterday, Mr. Kumaraswamy and I discussed in Periyapatna whether or not we should field a candidate against Darshan," Mr. Gowda said.

BJP's incumbent MLA B. Harshavardhan, however, is expecting to be renominated in the coming election.

From Page One

Disappointed Congress ticket aspirants raise banner of revolt

Former legislator S.K. Basavarajan of Chitradurga too was upset after K.C. Veerendra, who quit the JD (S) and joined the Congress, was given the ticket.

In Molakalmuru, Yogesh Babu, defeated candidate in 2018 polls, strongly opposed fielding of N.Y. Gopalakrishna, who migrated from BJP to Congress.

In Kadur, there was a lot of heartburn among loyalists of Y.S.V. Datta, former JD (S) MLA, who joined the Congress expecting the ticket. Mr. Datta called a meeting of his loyalists on Sunday to decide the future course of action as he has been denied ticket . Sources said his loyalists are mounting pressure on Mr Datta to contest as an independent candidate. Mr. Datta is a loyalist of Mr. Siddaramaiah.

In Gangavati constituency in Koppal district, aspirant H.R. Srinath told a private TV channel that the party candidate Iqbal Ansari would be defeated. Mr. Srinath alleged that senior leaders, including Mr. Siddaramaiah, betrayed him by denying the ticket. But he would remain in the party, he said.

All is not well in the Dharwad unit of the Congress. Giving ticket to former Minister Santosh Lad has disappointed supporters of former MLC Nagaraj Chabbi, who is said to be a loyalist of the KPCC chief. Fielding of former Minister Vinay Kulkarni in Dharwad has caused discontent among a section of Muslim leaders who wanted Ismail Tamatgar as their candidate.

Poll expert Sandeep Shastri said: "He who manages dissidents more effectively will clearly have the upper hand in elections. The BJP is yet to announce its candidates, while JD (S) has some seats where it has not declared its candidates".

Meanwhile, Mr. Shivakumar said the party had not guaranteed the ticket to anyone.<SU>"We have our calculations....we have decided the ticket based on our survey reports." "We will make our efforts to rein in disgruntled leaders," he said.

All eyes on BJP parliamentary board meet today; first list likely on Monday

The party is facing anti-incumbency and given that no ruling party has been re-elected in the State since 1985, the BJP will 'play safe' and 'winnability' will be the main criterion for candidate selection, sources say; several ticket aspirants are camping in Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

All eyes are now set on the BJP parliamentary board meeting scheduled for Saturday evening in New Delhi, where the first list of candidates for the Karnataka Assembly elections will be finalised.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and the former Chief Minister and parliamentary board member B.S. Yediyurappa left for the national capital on Friday, to be part of the Saturday's meeting.

Mr. Bommai told reporters in Hubballi on Friday that for each constituency two or three names were shortlisted and the candidates' list would be finalised on Saturday. "The Congress seems to have no candidates at all in 60 constituencies. KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar is calling our MLAs and offering them the ticket. The Congress has no organisation at the ground level, whereas there are multiple aspirants for each ticket in our party which itself is an indication that we are winning," he said.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and B.S. Yediyurappa will participate in the BJP parliamentary board meeting in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

Many ticket aspirants met Mr. Yediyurappa, lobbying for themselves over the last two days, before he left for Delhi. Several ticket aspirants have also been camping in Delhi and lobbying hard.

The ruling BJP is facing anti-incumbency and given that no ruling party has been re-elected in the State since 1985, the party will "play safe" and "winnability" will be the main criterion for candidate selection, sources said. The party high command has independently carried out multiple surveys across the State and the candidate who has the best chance to win will be given the ticket, sources said. Apart from this, the results of the polling among party office-bearers and prominent workers, who were asked to suggest three candidates from each constituency, and the shortlist created by the State core committee will be the main inputs for the selection.

Speculations

Though statements of Mr. Yediyurappa – that "six to eight MLAs will not be given the ticket" – and Mr. Bommai – that "there will be new experiments in candidate selection" – ahead of the recently held core committee meeting have triggered intense speculation that many incumbents would be denied the ticket, it is unlikely, sources said. "The party presently cannot afford to rock the boat and deny ticket to MLAs who will win," a senior leader said.

Karnataka Votes 2023

"Very few MLAs may be denied the ticket. Mr. Yediyurappa, S.A. Ravindranath, and Halady Srinivas Shetty have voluntarily announced retirement. Madal Virupakshappa, who is in jail over a corruption case, and N.Y. Gopalakrishna, who resigned and defected to the Congress, will not get the ticket.

Apart from them, a handful of them may be denied the ticket, not more than that," a senior party leader said. Party circles are abuzz that M.P. Kumaraswamy from Mudigere, Lalji Mendon from Kaup, Raghupati Bhat from Udupi, Ravi Subramanya from Basavanagudi, and Uday Garudachar from Chickpet are among the few who may lose the ticket.

Hangs in the balance

This, even as the future of senior leaders such as K.S. Eshwarappa and V. Somanna hangs in the balance. The party may pitch Mr. Somanna against Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah in Varuna, after Mr. Yediyurappa ruled out his son B.Y. Vijayendra's contest from there. However, Mr. Somanna has reportedly asked ticket for his son Arun Somanna from his present constituency, Govindarajanagar in Bengaluru, but the party is not keen on this, sources said. When quizzed whether Mr. Somanna will be fielded against Mr. Siddaramaiah, Mr. Bommai said this would also be deliberated in Saturday's meeting.

Meanwhile, Mr. Eshwarappa has reportedly asked that his son Kantesh be fielded, failing which he has demanded the ticket for himself. Party MLC Ayanur Manjunath has already resigned and announced that he will be contesting from the Shivamogga City seat, even if he has to as an Independent, signalling rebellion.

The Congress is yet to announce its Shivamogga City candidate, amid reports that it may poach Mr. Manjunath.

When the teacher failed to impress his student

Sathish G.T.
HASSAN

Years ago, Y.S.V. Datta, taught his student D.K. Shivakumar mathematical calculations. However, years later, the teacher's political calculations have gone wrong, and the student is being held responsible.

The former legislator, Mr. Datta, who has been known for his long association with JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, joined the Congress after quitting the JD(S) in January. He was banking on Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah's support to seek the ticket to contest from Kadur constituency in Chikkamagaluru district as the Congress candidate. But his name did not figure in the list released on Thursday.

Mr. Datta, who won the seat with a huge margin in 2013 on the JD(S) ticket, suffered defeat in 2018 against Belli Prakash of the BJP. However, he enjoys considerable support in the constituency. The Congress chose K.S. Anand, denying Mr. Datta a chance.

According to sources in the Congress, many factors worked against Mr. Datta. The party is not in a position to field a Kuruba candidate in any other constituency in Chikkamagaluru and Hassan districts, except in Kadur. The JD(S) had already announced two Kuruba candidates in the two districts – Ashok Banavara for Arasikere in Hassan district and C.M. Dhananjaya for Kadur. And the surveys conducted by the party were not in favour of Mr. Datta, sources added.

Denied ticket: A file photo of Y.S.V. Datta being welcomed to the Congress by party leaders D.K. Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru.

Besides that, it is said that Mr. Shivakumar, KPCC president, was not in favour of fielding Mr. Datta. According to reports, an audio clip purportedly containing the voice of Mr. Datta, which went viral, also worked against him. The person in the clip stated that he would support Mr. Siddaramaiah for the Chief Minister's post, but not Mr. Shivakumar. He also did mention that Mr. Shivakumar was his student. The audio clip is said to have disappointed Mr. Shivakumar.

Mr. Datta conducted private tuitions in Bengaluru for many years, and Mr. Shivakumar was one of his students. However, decades later, it seems, the teacher has failed to impress the student.

Meeting tomorrow

Soon after the Congress announced its list on Thursday, Mr. Datta's supporters met at Yagati, his native village in Kadur taluk. They all expressed anger over the Congress denying him the ticket and urged Mr. Datta to contest as an Independent.

Considering the opinions of his supporters, the former legislator has convened a meeting on Sunday in Kadur. He is expected to take a decision after the meeting.

2.6 crore electors take part in EVM demonstrations

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Nearly half of Karnataka's population is now aware of the functioning of the electronic voting machines (EVMs) that will be used in the Assembly polls. The Election Commission has completed awareness in all polling stations and over 2.6 crore electors have participated in EVM demonstrations across the State from February till March 29, when the elections were announced.

This time, newly manufactured EVMs that have not been used in any other State before, are being used in the elections, V. Raghavendra, Joint Chief Electoral Officer (EVM), told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a media workshop.

Hands-on experience: Electronic voting machine demonstration for electors under way in Hassan.

Demonstrations

Of the total 2,64,37,306 electors who participated in EVM demonstrations so far, 2,49,22,405 people witnessed the demonstrations at the revenue sub-divisions. The highest elector participation was in Hassan (32,18,159) followed by Tumakuru (10,58,446), Chitradurga (9,95,492), Bidar (9,87,498), and Bengaluru Urban (9,37,810).

The lowest number of elector participation was in Kodagu (20,153), followed by Udupi (28,264), Chamarajanagar (98,598), Yadgir (1,31,919), and BBMP South (1,22,394), according to data.

"We started from February 15 and have covered all the polling stations till the announcement of the elections. Now, we are continuing to create awareness through digital media platforms. A total of 2,945 teams were deployed to take up awareness through EVM Demonstration Centre (EDC) and Mobile Demonstration Vans (MDVs)," the official said.

For a total 58,282 polling stations in the State, 1,15,709 ballot units have been made available and all have undergone first-level checking. This is 199% more than the requirement, according to officials from the Election Commission. Similarly, the 82,543 control units (142% more than the requirement) and 89,379 VVPAT machines (153% more than the requirement) have been kept ready. All machines have undergone checking, officials said.

"This time, we will be using the latest M3 EVMs manufactured by Hyderabad-based Electronics Corporation of India Ltd," Mr. Raghavendra said.

Nehru Olekar's MLA status restored as High Court stays his conviction in corruption case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has stayed the conviction of Nehru C. Olekar, BJP MLA for Haveri, in a corruption case of 2012, resulting in restoration of his position as an MLA. He was disqualified as an MLA soon after a special court on February 13 convicted and sentenced him to two years imprisonment.

Justice K. Natarajan passed the interim order on April 5 staying the conviction. The High Court had on March 3 stayed the sentence on an appeal filed by Mr. Olekar against the judgment of the special court.

The special court of sessions set up to exclusively deal with criminal cases related to MPs and MLAs in Karnataka had held that Mr. Olekar had abused his position as a public servant, and dishonestly and fraudulently obtained pecuniary advantage to his two sons by creating false work done certificates and ensuring that certain civil contracts of Haveri City Municipal Council were awarded to his sons.

The High Court noted that Mr. Olekar would be contesting in the upcoming elections to be held in May; and by way of operation of law under Section 8 of the Representation of the Peoples Act, he was already disqualified soon after his conviction with a minimum sentence of two years imprisonment in view of the judgment of the apex court. Mr. Olekar cannot contest elections if the conviction is not stayed, the court pointed out.

However, the High Court said that "there is a *prima facie* error in the judgment" of the special court with regard to the issue of proceeding against the MLA in the absence of sanction for his prosecution, and the error may lead to the acquittal of the appellant MLA while hearing the final arguments on the appeal.

Noticing that the court has the power to stay the operation of the conviction addition to the sentence, Justice Natarajan said that "it is an appropriate case where the conviction is required to be stayed as this court has already suspended the sentence."

D.B. Inamdar critically ill

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

D.B. Inamdar, former Minister and veteran Congress leader, is critically ill.

He has been admitted to Manipal hospital in Bengaluru for over three weeks now.

The 74-year-old leader is suffering from ailments of lungs and liver. Doctors treating him have told his son Basanagouda Inamdar that his condition is critical, but stable.

He has served as a Minister and as an MLA for Kittur several times.

Kozhikode train arson case: suspect sent to 11-day police custody, UAPA may be invoked

Senior officer says he admitted to the crime in the first round of investigation; suspect discharged from hospital as he had sustained only first degree burns and was found fit to undergo interrogation; *ex gratia* of ₹5 lakh each to families of the deceased handed over in the presence of CM

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The suspect in the Kozhikode train arson case in Kerala, Shahrukh Saifi, 24, was sent to police custody for 11 days on Friday. He was taken to the Armed Reserve Camp of the police at Maloorkkunnu in the city for the second round of interrogation.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by Additional Director General of Police M.R. Ajithkumar moved the custody request at the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court-1 after he was found by the medical board fit to be discharged from the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital where he was under treatment for burns and jaundice.

Tough days ahead: Shahrukh Saifi being taken to the police camp in Kozhikode after he was sent to custody on Friday. K. RAGESH

'Injuries not grave'

Quoting medical reports that facilitated the suspect's discharge from the hospital on Friday, police sources said Saifi had sustained only first degree burns and was found to be fit for undergoing interrogation in police custody. The other injuries that he sustained after his suspected fall from the train in Maharashtra while escaping to Gujarat and the liver inflammation were not found grave.

Police sources confirmed that chances of invoking various sections under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against the suspect in the wake of the latest investigation reports and evidence gathered by the forensic wing were high. He had been already charged under Sections 302, 307, 326-A and 436 of the Indian Penal Code apart from Section 151 of the Railways Act for destroying railway properties.

Admitting to crime

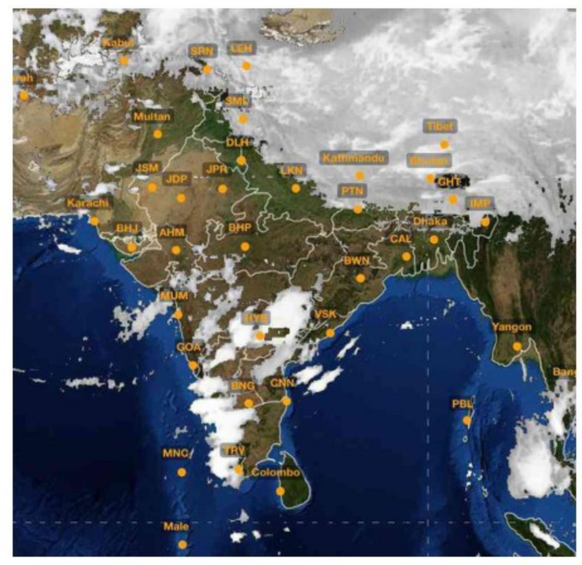
Meanwhile, ADGP M.R. Ajithkumar on Friday said Shahrukh Saifi admitted to the crime in the first round of investigation. Briefing the progress of the last five days' probe for the first time to the media, he said only a primary investigation had been completed in the incident and more details were awaited.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan visited the houses of Kozhikode train fire victims Manikoth Rehmat and K.P. Noufeeq.

Kannur District Collector S. Chandrasekhar handed over the financial assistance of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased in the presence of the Chief Minister.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Saturday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/ gusty wind likely at isolated places over east Rajasthan, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Marathwada, Konkan & Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	2	35.5	19.8	Kozhikode	—	36.4	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	36.6	24.5	Kurnool	—	39.3	27.1
Aizawl	—	33.7	12.5	Lucknow	—	35.4	19.1
Allahabad	—	37.5	19.4	Madurai	—	37.4	25.4
Bengaluru	—	33.0	22.2	Mangaluru	—	33.4	25.2
Bhopal	—	—	20.4	Mumbai	—	35.5	24.6
Bhubaneswar	—	37.1	22.6	Mysuru	—	34.0	21.2
Chandigarh	—	33.2	16.1	New Delhi	—	34.0	15.4
Chennai	—	34.1	26.6	Patna	—	37.7	20.8
Coimbatore	—	35.8	24.2	Port Blair	—	32.8	24.6
Dehradun	—	31.9	14.6	Puducherry	—	34.8	25.2
Gangtok	46	20.2	10.7	Pune	—	36.4	22.3
Goa	—	33.1	24.4	Raipur	—	37.6	23.9
Guwahati	2	32.6	19.4	Ranchi	—	34.7	19.6
Hubballi	—	35.0	22.0	Shillong	—	24.6	12.1
Hyderabad	18	33.7	23.2	Shimla	—	21.0	9.9
Imphal	—	31.2	15.0	Srinagar	—	20.6	4.4
Jaipur	—	33.9	22.6	Thiruvananthapuram	19	34.2	24.2
Kochi	—	32.6	26.0	Tiruchi	—	37.5	26.4
Kohima	—	23.8	13.6	Vijayawada	—	35.4	25.6
Kolkata	—	36.9	26.7	Visakhapatnam	—	33.6	25.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	7	30	.15	139	130	
Bengaluru	.24	.33	.67	—	92	
Chennai	3	.51	102	34	32	
Delhi	.18	.51	.33	256	197	
Hyderabad	6	.32	.44	98	132	
Kolkata	.23	.29	.88	99	102	
Lucknow	.29	.68	.38	103	107	
Mumbai	.37	.21	.44	281	158	
Pune	106	137	114	215	127	
Visakhapatnam	.15	.39	.29	49	90	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Begusarai, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 357 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu recorded a healthy AQI score of 17

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

KMF to appeal to Amul not to venture into Karnataka, which is a milk-excess market

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

Amid uproar over the entry of milk behemoth Amul into the Bengaluru market to compete with Nandini milk, the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) will raise the issue of competition between two successful milk cooperative models at the national level even as the timing of the announcement, ahead of the Assembly elections, is being speculated.

The KMF, which competes with Amul in neutral regions in Mumbai, Nagpur, Goa, Hyderabad, and Chennai markets, will raise the issue of competition between the two cooperatives with the dairy industry body – the National Dairy Development Board. Further, it will also write to Amul, requesting the largest cooperative not to venture into Karnataka, a milk excess State. "It makes little sense for two successful cooperative bodies to fight in a milk-excess State and hurt each other's business interests that could favour private players. Instead, the competition to market milk should be in milk-deficient States, which will help the two cooperatives, as well as the consuming public," KMF sources said and added that there was an unwritten understanding that the two would not enter each other's home turf.

Currently, it is estimated that Bengaluru consumes about 33 lakh litres of milk and curd daily of which about 27 lakh litres, including 23 lakh litres of milk, is supplied by the KMF through four district milk unions of Bengaluru, Kolar, Tumakuru, and Mandya besides Mother Dairy. The rest of the supply comes through nearly a dozen small and big private dairies besides the loose milk that is sold to individual homes.

At ₹39 a litre, Nandini toned milk is the cheapest in South India. Amul, in its announcement on Thursday, has priced its Taaza at ₹27 and Amul Gold Special at ₹32 for half a litre. Amul curd is priced at ₹30 for half a litre while Nandini curd is priced at ₹24 for half a litre.

Amul took to Twitter on April 5 to announce the supply of fresh milk and curd in Bengaluru through online platform.

The KMF is expected to raise the issue of competition between the two cooperatives with the National Dairy Development Board

On April 5, Amul took to Twitter to announce the supply of fresh milk and curd in Bengaluru through online platform, which resulted in severe backlash in social media platforms. Amul is yet to announce the launch date.

KMF sources said Amul for the past seven years was already selling milk in small quantities in Hubballi and Belagavi, which is mostly sourced from Goa. The announcement comes in the backdrop of suspicion in Karnataka over moves to merge the KMF with Gujarat -based Amul. The talk of cooperation between the two big cooperatives in the country by Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Mandya in December had raised speculation of merger, and had turned into a political slugfest.

The speculation in the milk industry here is that Amul, which has tied up with the Andhra Pradesh government to revive the cooperative milk sector in the State, could bring milk from the bordering districts in the neighbouring State. "The KMF is geared up for competition, and we believe that Amul will not be able to match us in price or supply chain in the Karnataka market," KMF sources said.

Congress opposes Amul's move

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah has opposed dairy giant Amul's entry into the Bengaluru market.

He backed Nandini and tweeted: "Banks built by our elders in Karnataka were eaten up. Now, Prime Minister @narendramodi and Union Minister for Cooperation @AmitShah have plotted to adopt our farmer's daily bread Nandini. Watch out Kannadigas...!!"

The former Chief Minister further said: "Gujarat-based Amul had previously tried to enter Karnataka's market to sell milk and curd. We had not allowed it to happen then, but now BJP in Karnataka is welcoming them with open arms". He said: "KMF has witnessed a fall in the procurement of milk under @BJP4Karnataka govt. Instead of the usual collection of about 99 lakh litre, the collection has dropped to 71 lakh litre. Is this part of the conspiracy against KMF."

KPCC chief D.K. Shivakumar and MLA Priyank Kharge too opposed the entry of Amul into Karnataka.

Kiran Kumar Reddy, ex-A.P. CM, joins BJP

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, the last Chief Minister of unified Andhra Pradesh, joined the BJP in the presence of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and other senior leaders in New Delhi on Friday.

A fierce critic of bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and whose views were apparently ignored by the Congress high command, Mr. Reddy had famously said that "no match is over until the last ball is bowled", suggesting that, as an acclaimed batsman who played first class cricket matches before entering politics, he would do his best to keep the State united. While joining the BJP, he said the Congress took unilateral decisions, and this attitude had brought about its fall from grace.

N. Kiran Kumar Reddy

Crowd-puller

In reverence: D. Veerendra Heggade, MP and Dharmadhikari of Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala, offering prayers to Karaga in Bengaluru on Friday. The procession began from Sri Dharmaraya Swamy temple in the heart of the city. ANI

INBRIEF

Telangana BJP leader Bandi Sanjay released from jail

Telangana Bharatiya Janata Party president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar, on Friday, slammed the BRS regime over the TSPSC question paper leak and said that BJP would continue its fight until the 'distraught' job aspirants get justice.

A massive rally christened *Nirudyoga March* (march of the unemployed youth) will be organised in Warangal soon, he said, while reiterating his demand for a judicial probe by a sitting judge into the leak episode, stern action against the guilty and ₹1 lakh compensation each to the affected job aspirants.

NGT sets up panel to revisit clearance given to Great Nicobar project

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on April 3 ordered a stay on the ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Island (GNI) project and set up a committee to revisit the environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

A high-power committee headed by the Secretary, MoEF&CC has been asked to submit the report within two months.

The Great Nicobar Island is a mega project to be implemented at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

The main contentions in the appeals were that the project will have adverse impact on the rich biodiversity of the area and damage the habitats of endangered species.

The Galathea bay in the island is a nesting ground for birds and the project area is part of Coastal Regulation Zones-IA and IB.

One of the appeals challenged the forest clearance on the ground that the impact of diversion of 130.75 square km of pristine tropical rainforests on biodiversity and tribals has not been considered.

(With inputs from PTI)

Karnataka appoints SPP for disposal of valuables seized from Jayalalithaa

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has finally appointed a special public prosecutor (SPP) to appear on its behalf in a case related to the disposal of movable assets of the former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister late J. Jayalalithaa, recovered during raids on her house over a disproportionate assets case. With this move, the process of auctioning these valuables has received a boost and it will likely start soon. There had been an inordinate delay in the government appointing an SPP in the case, holding up the disposal of these seized valuables.

The assets that will now be auctioned off include 27 items such as 11,344 "costly saris", 750 "decorated chappals", apart from 468 gold ornaments, and 700 kg of silver articles.

Case transferred

As the DA case was transferred to Karnataka in 2003, these valuables were shifted to the Karnataka treasury. She and her associates, including V.K. Sasikala, were convicted in 2014. Since then, there has been an inordinate delay in auctioning these assets.

In November 2021, H.A. Mohan, 32nd Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge, wrote to the Registrar of the Karnataka High Court in which he said: "Due to non-availability of an SPP it has become very difficult for this court to take further steps for the disposal of documents and properties". The letter also said the High Court had issued several reminders to the Law Department of Karnataka to appoint an SPP in the case, to no avail and requested the Registrar, to issue instructions to the department to immediately appoint an SPP in the case.

Petitions

However, despite this, the government had not appointed an SPP till recently, prompting RTI activist Narasimha Murthy to file petitions before the High Court and the Supreme Court of India seeking directions to the State government in this regard.

"My petition is coming up for hearing in the Supreme Court on April 11. In the run-up to it, the Karnataka government has now appointed an SPP in the case," he told *The Hindu*.

The order, a copy of which is available with *The Hindu*, appoints State Public Prosecutor-1 Kiran S. Javali as the SPP to appear on behalf of the government of Karnataka in cases related to the disposal of properties seized in the DA case of Jayalalithaa. The appointment was made on March 27.

Pause and effect

Developments in the global financial system have given RBI cause for pause

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has unanimously and wisely decided to apply a temporary pause to its inflation-battling monetary tightening by keeping the repo rate unchanged. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das was emphatic in stressing that the decision to pause was "for this meeting only", underlining the commitment to ensuring that retail inflation is progressively aligned to the mandated target of 4%. Clearly, developments in the global financial system, particularly the banking sector turmoil and the volatility and uncertainty they have triggered, have weighed heavily on policymakers' decision to wait and watch. Notwithstanding his assertions that India's 'banking and non-banking financial service sectors remain healthy and economic activity remains resilient', it is the spectre of rising credit costs posing risks to both consumption demand and private investment that was a key factor in the World Bank's calculus earlier this week, when it cut India's 2023-24 growth forecast to 6.3%. With the global economy still facing headwinds including from unabated geopolitical tensions, which the World Bank warned could result in a recession were more shocks to occur, the RBI's policymakers have judiciously chosen to subordinate their concerns over inflation, for now, so as to ensure the growth momentum is not undermined.

Still, monetary authorities have only a small window in which to see if their prognostication of a moderation in inflation is indeed starting to pan out. With Mr. Das acknowledging that core inflation remains elevated across a range of goods and services and unyielding, the MPC faces a challenge in its mandate of achieving durable disinflation. As the RBI's latest Monetary Policy Report notes, upside risks to the inflation outlook emanate from factors including higher global crude and commodity prices and extreme weather conditions and deficient monsoon rains. Already, as Mr. Das acknowledged, the sudden recent announcement of an output cut by OPEC+ producers had resulted in a jump in crude prices, which could well upset the RBI's assumption of crude averaging $85 a barrel (for the Indian basket) this year. Similarly, the outlook for food prices too is beset with uncertainty given the unseasonal rains in parts of the country combined with the likelihood of an El Niño, which could raise summer temperatures and depress monsoon rainfall. Additionally, the RBI sees milk prices staying firm over the coming months amid fodder cost pressures. Policymakers must remember, as the RBI chief so pithily said, price stability still remains "the best guarantee for sustainable growth".

Science for all

LIGO-India must contribute to the communities it needs sustenance from

The Union Cabinet's approval to set up a gravitational-wave detection facility in Maharashtra, a ₹2,600 crore project, is one that will consist of a detector called the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO), to be built in the image of the twin LIGO instruments already operational in the U.S. Their detection of gravitational waves, in 2016, launched a new era of astronomy. A third detector is being built in India as part of the LIGO-India collaboration in order to improve the detectors' collective ability to pinpoint sources of gravitational waves in the sky. The Cabinet's approval throws up two opportunities: first, India could become a global site of gravitational physics research, aiding training and the handling of precision technologies and sophisticated control systems, ultimately, cementing a reputation for successfully running an experimental Big Science project. The starting requirement here is the timely release of funds for construction, followed by issuing the allocated resources without delay.

Second, LIGO-India can demonstrate an ability to reckon intelligently with Indian society's relationship with science, using the opportunities that Big Science affords. India has had a contested relationship with such projects, including, recently, the Challakere Science City and the stalled India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO). They need large land tracts, with inevitable implications for land-use change. Contests over land rights, against the backdrop of the sustainable use of natural resources, carbon sequestration targets, just transitions, and human rights, recall the interplay between the history of science and settler colonialism – an example is Hawaii's Thirty Meter Telescope, to be built on land the locals hold sacred. One contention there was that the land had been rendered physically inaccessible, and that "science had become an agent of colonisation", to quote science historian Leandra Swanner. A similar criticism has trailed experimental Big Science undertakings, including the INO, in the economically developing world: that they are far removed from the concerns of the majority. Shakier though this latter argument may be, such undertakings still have a responsibility to define their public value, beyond benefits to national industry and research. This is the second opportunity LIGO-India has, amplified by the context of the present moment: to build a facility that contributes to the communities from which it requires sustenance and knowledge, engage in good faith on concerns about access to land and other resources, and conduct public outreach on a par with the international LIGO Scientific Collaboration. The starting requirement is to contemplate what all LIGO-India can do for India.

The Trump indictment, a polarised America

Narayan Lakshman

The Manhattan District attorney's unprecedented action of indicting former United States President Donald Trump through a grand jury, on 34 felony charges relating to falsifying business records with the intention to commit another crime, has set the tenor for the coming campaign cycle which will culminate in the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

On the one hand there is little doubt that the 45th President flirted with the boundaries of legality through his presidency (2016-20), whether it was his attempts at election interference in Fulton County, Georgia, his role in inciting the January 6, 2021, insurrection, or his possession of classified information after leaving the White House. Indeed, criminal investigations are underway for each of these potential cases for the prosecution.

Plethora of cases

First, in Georgia, Fulton County District Attorney/prosecutor Fani Willis is examining the actions of Mr. Trump and his associates in the aftermath of the 2020 presidential election, particularly their attempts to exert pressure upon state officials to undo Mr. Trump's loss of the state in the election – including the now-infamous call to Georgia State Secretary Brad Raffensperger on January 2, 2021, during which Mr. Trump demanded that the Secretary "find 11,780 votes". The inquiry has also delved into plans to send fake electors to the Electoral College who would claim that Mr. Trump won, and the Trump team's calls to Georgia Governor Brian Kemp and others to press them on contesting the election results. While the investigation's work was completed in January, its report remains under wraps for the moment.

Second, as far as the House of Representatives panel investigating the role of Mr. Trump in the January 2021 insurrection is concerned, the committee in question shut down earlier this year after an 18-month inquiry, culminating in an 814-page report to the Justice Department that recommended prosecuting Mr. Trump. While the committee's referral has no legal weight to compel an indictment by the Justice Department, the enormous trove of evidentiary documents, statements of facts, and testimonies is likely to be of considerable value to the Department as it embarks on an investigation of its own.

Third, Attorney General of the of the United States Merrick Garland last year appointed Special Counsel Jack Smith to lead multiple probes into Mr. Trump's handling of classified documents post the end of his term in office. While Mr. Trump's attorney's certified in June 2022 that a "diligent search" for classified documents conducted at Mr. Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida yielded all classified documents on the site and they were then handed over to federal authorities, a short while later a Federal Bureau of Investigation raid discovered more than 100 further undisclosed documents.

> The United States confronts surging levels of hatred between social and political groups and apparent support for Trumpism as a movement

Along with probes into the actions of the Trump Organization's business dealings, each of these lines of inquiry has led to a sprawling mega-investigation of Mr. Trump and his associates. This implies that the first indictment against him, in the hush-money case, is only the beginning.

Agenda of hate

Stepping back from the cases against Mr. Trump, it is pertinent to ask what the impact of these investigations might be on his base of supporters across the U.S., particularly in light of him characterising the inquiries as a "witch hunt" and "political persecution". On the one hand it is no surprise that the American electorate remains as bitterly polarised as ever. A Pew Research Center poll last year found that the proportion of Republicans and Democrats who viewed not just the opposing party but also its members as close-minded, dishonest, immoral, unintelligent and lazy has increased significantly from 2016 to 2022. For example, it was striking that in 2016, 47% of Republicans and 35% of Democrats said that those in the other party were a lot or somewhat more immoral than other Americans; yet by August 2022, 72% of Republicans regarded Democrats as more immoral, and 63% of Democrats said the same of Republicans.

This means that through the administrations of Mr. Trump and current U.S. President Joe Biden, Americans are now talking past each other and the sense of the two sides having entirely different worldviews with almost no common ground whatsoever has deepened – for example with regard to reproductive rights in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court removing the constitutional right to abortion.

However, in its 'purest' form, Trumpism, as a political movement, has less to do with conservative social values that appeal to the core of the Republican Party faithful than it does with transactional nativism. Indeed, some have even characterised Mr. Trump as a socially moderate, not extremist, conservative. The forces that catapulted the Trump administration to power and the policy chaos that his White House unleashed were, however, a function of populism that revolved around economic policies that purportedly protected the disenfranchised, white, blue-collar worker in middle America.

Mr. Trump's political rhetoric and executive actions also prioritised institutional disengagement on global treaties – whether in regard to his administration driving the U.S.'s exit from the Paris climate accord and UN Human Rights Council, or its broadside attacks on the World Trade Organization and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

These forces are still alive and well. At the domestic level, through the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been visceral opposition to vaccine mandates and restrictions on movements and gatherings. The anti-science conspiracy theorists have regularly used disinformation to attack public health professionals – including former Chief Medical Adviser to the U.S. President, Dr. Anthony Fauci– in a bid to spread hate and blunt the impact of policies designed to curb the spread of the virus.

Mr. Trump was at the heart of this propagandistic messaging in many instances, including, early on in the pandemic, when he variously questioned the efficacy of masks, and talked up unproven and unscientific treatments. He also crippled the potential of the federal government to slow the proliferation of the coronavirus in 2020, when his administration failed to quickly roll out an effective COVID-19 testing plan, to put together a comprehensive national strategy for distributing protective equipment to medical professionals, and to rapidly ramp up contact tracing.

On the global front, America's retreat from its own unipolar status has proceeded apace. Having exited a variety of international treaties, the focus of Trumpist rhetoric has now shifted back to domestic economic concerns. On the one hand, the efforts of the Biden administration to enact a $1.9 trillion stimulus package and bring down the jobless rate to 3.6% in February this year from a peak of 14.7% in April 2020 – with the economy adding over 10 million jobs during that time – has failed to garner political traction for Democrats owing to a toxic combination of soaring inflation and supply chain disruptions. The latter phenomena have stemmed from both the pandemic-related slowing of business activity and from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In parallel, persistent attacks on minorities, especially immigrant workers, for "stealing" American jobs have been a convenient diversion to shift the debate back to the sensitive issues of race and migration. Should Mr. Trump, or even another Republican, enter the Oval Office, Indian high-skilled migrant labour could be impacted under this paradigm too, for example through tightening conditions for the grant of H-1B visas.

Between the surging levels of hatred between social and political groups, and apparent support for Trumpism as a movement, it is likely that even if the cases against Mr. Trump work their way through the courts and lead to convictions, the U.S. is still far from truly reckoning with the promise of its founding fathers to achieve the dream of *E pluribus unum*, or 'Out of many, one'.

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Some advice to India on the IFA negotiations

Prabhash Ranjan

is Professor and Vice Dean, Jindal Global Law School

Although the World Trade Organization (WTO) is in a moribund condition, there is prolific activity taking place in one area of rule-making: investment facilitation agreement (IFA). Backed by more than 100 countries (it does not include India), the proposed IFA is meant to create legally binding provisions aimed at facilitating investment flows. The legal obligations *inter alia* will require states to augment regulatory transparency and predictability of investment measures. This agreement will be very different from investment protection agreements such as bilateral investment treaties (BITs) that allow foreign investors to bring claims against the host state for alleged treaty breaches. This is known as investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS).

Fear of ISDS

Presumably, one of the reasons India is not a party to IFA negotiations is the apprehension that foreign investors could use a future IFA to bring claims under the existing BITs. Anwar Shaik, India's Counsellor at the WTO, has flagged this concern. Arguably, foreign investors may use the most favoured nation (MFN) provision in BITs to borrow or import stipulations from the IFA perceived to be more advantageous than those given in the underlying BIT.

Likewise, the foreign investor may use the ubiquitous provision of fair and equitable treatment (FET) present in BITs to challenge non-compliance with IFA. Older investment treaties rarely elucidate the meaning of the FET provision, which, in turn, allows ISDS tribunals to supply its normative content. Tribunals have held that the FET provision includes investors' legitimate expectations. Debatably, the foreign investor may argue that the commitments undertaken by a state under the IFA create 'legitimate expectations' of the investor. Another entry point for the provisions of the IFA into the ISDS mechanism can be the so-called 'umbrella clause' – a BIT clause that allows contractual and other commitments owed to a foreign investor to be brought under the treaty's protective umbrella.

> India should not be opposed to joining the investment facilitation agreement negotiations for fear of investor-state dispute settlement claims

However, these are mere presumptions. Even if a foreign investor brings such claims, the ISDS arbitration tribunal is unlikely to agree with the investor for the following reasons. First, as George Bermann and others argue, many BITs exempt an economic integration agreement from the application of MFN. Thus, the possibility of foreign investors successfully importing IFA provisions into the BIT is remote.

Second, it is doubtful that an ISDS tribunal will accept the argument that mere non-compliance with IFA breaches an investor's legitimate expectations. The only exception to this will be if a State has included its IFA commitments as part of the specific assurances to the foreign investor luring her to invest and then goes back on these assurances without a proportionate public policy justification. Thus, a binding IFA, minus other things, cannot be the basis of an investor's legitimate expectations.

Third, most new investment treaties avoid 'umbrella clauses' altogether. This limits the possibility of investors suing states for non-compliance of IFA obligations as a breach of a BIT's 'umbrella clause'.

Moreover, the IFA can be firewalled from BITs by the former unequivocally stating that it cannot be used to interpret or apply any rule for the protection of investment contained in any investment treaty. The IFA can also categorically state that it does not create rights for non-signatory countries and their investors. Indeed, the draft IFA text includes such language aimed at insulating the IFA from BITs and ISDS.

Reforming BITs

Critics argue this will not be enough. The IFA cannot bind an ISDS tribunal, which will hear a claim brought by an investor under a BIT. For the ISDS tribunal, the IFA is just another international law instrument that must be interpreted and applied in accordance with the context of the relevant BIT. Countries can overcome this problem by amending their respective BITs to exclude the IFA from its scope. This is not a mere theoretical possibility. Given the sizeable number of 100-plus countries pushing for the IFA, who wish to insulate it from ISDS, these countries can agree among themselves to reform their BITs to reflect this will. In fact, the BIT reform process is already underway, with older treaties being replaced with newer ones that contain more balanced provisions.

The possibility of an audacious ISDS tribunal interpreting provisions broadly can never be ruled out. But this cannot be a basis to oppose international lawmaking, in the same way that a hypothetical likelihood of a national court interpreting the law wrongly cannot be the reason to cease domestic lawmaking. Thus, India should not be opposed to joining the IFA negotiations at the WTO due to fear of ISDS claims.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taking down 'fake news'

The spread of false and misleading information through social media platforms is, undoubtedly, a menace to any democratic country. But in what way is the move (Page 1, "Online platforms must take down PIB-flagged 'fake news', April 7) announced by the Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology going to address the problem? It is not even clear how independent and insulated the agency responsible for classifying "fake news" is going to be from the Union government. If the attitude of this government toward criticism in mainstream media is any yardstick, one cannot rule out the possibility of sophisticated 'find and delete schemes' behind the scenes for image-laundering purposes in the name of the elimination of "fake news", especially during election time. Ultimately, voters should not be starved of critical information about the government.

A. Venkatasubramanian,
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

Online fraud

It is unfortunate that people continue to fall prey to online fraudsters despite warnings ("1930 helpline stands between online fraudsters and gullible customers: ₹306 cr. saved since 2021", April 3). The main reason for people being cheated appears to be a lack of awareness about fraudsters and their intentions. Newspapers do report such incidents of fraud, but this may not be of much use with the newspaper reading habit on the decline. The government must direct 'in vogue' social media platforms to compulsorily give wide publicity to online frauds. With digital technology fast becoming an integral part of everyone's life, the chances for fraud are also increasing. Awareness is a must.

Kosaraju Chandramouli,
Hyderabad

Political crossover

The political move by 'newcomer to the BJP', Anil Antony, may not be politically significant to the Congress party, with the exception that Mr. Antony is the son of a very senior and admired leader in the Congress. There is no written rule that father and child should share the same political ideology. A.K. Antony could have gracefully dismissed his son's political act and strengthened his party's stance.

Sanath Kumar T.S.,
Thrissur, Kerala

The Bharatiya Janata Party may think it is being very clever by getting Anil Antony to switch sides in order to influence the Christian vote in Kerala. But it is like packaging the same bar of soap with a new wrapper — it is just fooling the public. The Congress also needs to look at why it is becoming a recruitment agency for the BJP.

Devadas V.,
Talap, Kannur, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address.

Nitu Ghanghas at her home in Dhanana village of Haryana's Bhiwani district. V.V. KRISHNAN

The women boxers of Haryana's 'Little Cuba'

Infrastructure and the power of example have long made Bhiwani India's boxing hub. **Ashok Kumar** meets Nitu Ghanghas, the district's latest champion, and reports on the growing popularity of women's boxing, with some academies registering more girls than boys

Nitu Ghanghas is busy fielding a steady stream of visitors and journalists in Dhanana village in Bhiwani, Haryana. She has just returned home after clinching the gold medal in the 48 kg category at the Women's World Boxing Championships in New Delhi. In Bhiwani, where the chief produce is boxers, champions often jostle for space under the limelight. This is Nitu's turn to enjoy her celebrity status.

Despite a childhood in a district full of boxers, Nitu, 22, was initially not interested in the sport. It was her father, Jai Bhagwan, who sits next to her on a plastic chair in a dimly lit room, who pushed her to take it up. "Usually, it is the child who wants to pursue a career of their choice and the parents who oppose it," says Nitu. "But that was not the case for me. My father pushed me into boxing and never let me give up, though I felt like calling it quits many times."

The first time she considered giving up was in 2013. Nitu recalls commuting by public transport during the initial years of training and often returning home late in the evening. This was not considered "socially acceptable" for a young woman. "I come from a normal middle-class family in a village. What my neighbours and relatives said about me impacted me as it would any young girl. I wanted to quit. My father, instead, offered to quit his job to help me continue my training. He would accompany me to the training centre, which is around 20 km from my village, twice a day. And he would wait for me outside, irrespective of the weather, while I trained inside," she says.

The first few years were difficult for the family on the financial front as well. But Nitu managed to win cash awards at various events and repay the money borrowed from relatives. "I also got a job as an Assistant Manager in the Reserve Bank of India two months ago," says Nitu, beaming. "And I am expecting a promotion after the gold medal at the Women's World Boxing Championships."

A district full of boxers

Bhiwani, one of the 22 districts of Haryana and located around 130 km west of the national capital, has been the hub of boxing for more than three decades. Its tremendous success in producing champions in the sport has earned it the moniker 'Little Cuba'.

"The players of the Indian boxing squad for international events are mostly from Bhiwani," says Nitu's coach, Jagdish Singh, who has been at the Bhiwani Boxing Club since 2003. "During the 2008 Beijing Olympics, four of the five boxers were from Bhiwani. Three of them made it to the quarter-finals and Vijender Singh won the bronze. Similarly, in the Women's World Boxing Championships, eight of the 12 women boxers were from Haryana and five of them were from Bhiwani. Four of the five from Bhiwani made it to the quarter-finals."

By Singh's estimate, pugilists, both men and women, from his academy alone have won 19 world championship titles, including an Olympic bronze; 290 international medals; 600 national medals; and have accounted for five Arjuna Awards and six Bhim Awards.

> I always thought boxing was a man's sport. But I remember how four girls in 2003 impressed me. I went against the SAI's diktat and trained them. That was my first batch of women trainees.
>
> **JAGDISH SINGH**
> Coach, Bhiwani Boxing Club

Singh traces boxing history in Bhiwani to the late 1980s when Sports Authority of India (SAI) coach Captain (retd.) Hawa Singh and Haryana Sports Department coach Rajender Singh Yadav together laid the foundation for the sport in the city. Singh, who also coached Vijender Singh, cites 2003 as a turning point when three boxers from Bhiwani won medals at the Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad.

"I had always believed in the capability of my boxers. There was no looking back for them after the Afro-Asian Games. That was the first time that a victory procession for boxers was taken out in the city. The players were garlanded and their pictures appeared in the newspapers. All that encouraged them and made them hungry for more," he says.

The other turning points were the Olympic bronze medals won by Vijender Singh and Mary Kom in 2008 and 2012 respectively. Singh describes those victories as "the two defining moments in India's boxing history" which made the sport popular among youngsters. "The gold medals won by Nitu and Saweety Boora from Haryana at the Women's World Boxing Championships could be another turning point for the game," he hopes. Singh remembers Nitu as a "shy" and "introverted" girl. She first came to his notice in 2016 after she won the gold in the national championship for schools.

Photographs of the women world champions who were coached by him hang on the walls of the club alongside pictures of male boxers. They show gender parity. But Singh says the number of girls taking up the sport has gone up since Mary Kom's 2012 Olympic feat, and that he had more girl trainees than boys at his academy last month. "Of the 100 trainees, 54 were girls in February," he says. He cites jobs, cash rewards and recognition as the three big draws for both boys and girls who wish to take up the sport.

The skewed sex ratio in Haryana is often seen as a critical indicator of gender inequality and bias. Singh admits that he was once strongly opposed to the idea of women boxing. But he changed his view seeing the dedication and determination of four young girls two decades ago. "I always thought boxing was a man's sport. But I remember how those four girls in 2003 impressed me. I went against the SAI's diktat and trained them. That was my first batch of women trainees. Later, three of them landed jobs in the police and one was appointed as a coach in the Haryana Sports Department. Over the years, I have found that the women players trained by me have been more loyal than the male ones," he says.

Girls train at the Bhiwani Boxing Club, where Nitu Ghanghas has been undergoing training under coach Jagdish Singh. V.V. KRISHNAN

> Those who would advise us not to waste effort and money on Nitu's training are now sending their daughters to her for advice. The girls are raring to go. We are the ones who need to change the way we think.
>
> **MUKESH**
> Nitu's mother

The widespread perception in Haryana is that wrestling is more popular than boxing among women. Singh claims that there is equal participation among women in both these sports at various State, national and international events. "In the World Women's Boxing Championships, two of the four golds were won by Haryana pugilists. But the Olympic medal has so far eluded Haryana's women boxers and this puts the women wrestlers a little ahead of us," he explains.

Vikas Prashar, who has been running a boxing coaching centre called Prashar Academy in Paluwas village for the last five years, reckons that Bhiwani has more than 30 boxing academies. He has observed that more and more girls seek training when there is an increase in the medals tally. "Vijender Singh's Kaluwas village is the hub of boxers in Bhiwani. Boxing is the only sport played in the village," he says.

Former boxing coach Ramesh Boxer, who gave up the job after an injury, says boxing academies have gradually come up in neighbouring Hisar and Rohtak as well. However, he worries that the increasing number of academies across the State in the absence of proper regulation poses a threat to the athletes' safety and raises questions about the quality of training.

"While the craze for boxing has gone through the roof, the SAI hostel and the Haryana government's training centre in Bhiwani are unable to deal with the rush. This has led to an increase in the number of academies. But there are no regulations in place to ensure that the coaches at these places are qualified. Also, most of the academies are run on a shoestring budget and don't have resources to hire physiotherapists and nutritionists," he says.

Dreams and sacrifices

Bhiwani attracts aspiring women boxers not only from Haryana, but from neighbouring Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat too. Several families have made great sacrifices in the hope that their children taste the same success that Mary Kom or Vijender Singh did.

A family from Ahmedabad says they shifted to Bhiwani city two years ago to enable the training of their 11-year-old daughter Chhavi. "While researching online, we found that Jagdish Singh was the best boxing coach in India. So, we shifted to Bhiwani. While my wife stays in a rented accommodation with our daughter, who is now enrolled in a school in Bhiwani, I still stay in Ahmedabad. I visit them once or twice a month," says Chhavi's father, Sanjay Solanki, a bank employee.

Vipin Kumar's family from Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat has been staying in Bhiwani's Sector 23 for six years now. Kumar, a 40-year-old former serviceman, is trying to fulfil his unrealised dreams through his daughter Tanisha. "My daughter was nine when we came here in 2017. Now she is 15. While my wife and mother stay with her in Bhiwani, I stay in Baghpat and visit them every two weeks. We wanted to give Tanisha the best coaching, and zeroed in on Bhiwani Boxing Club after an online search," says Kumar.

Nitu first attempted boxing after Vijender Singh tasted success at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. His bronze medal burnished Bhiwani's reputation; he is considered a hero. Boxing academies came up in every nook and corner of the city, and every other child aspired to be the next Vijender Singh. But Nitu struggled in the initial years.

Jai Bhagwan reassembled his family's priorities around Nitu's training after he saw Mary Kom's performance at the 2012 London Olympics. He got his daughter enrolled in the Bhiwani Boxing Club in 2012, on the advice of the father of Nitu's boxer friend Sakshi Chowdhary. He decided to spend all his time nurturing the "next Mary Kom". He went on 'leave without pay' from his job as a Bill Messenger at the Haryana Vidhan Sabha in Chandigarh in 2013 so that he could accompany his daughter to the boxing academy twice a day. His decision strained the family's limited financial resources, and they borrowed money to meet Nitu's training expenses. When Nitu faced a string of failures in the ring in the initial years, the decision to keep fighting – both for her father and for her – became even harder.

What gave Jai Bhagwan some hope in those years were the people who watched her in action in the ring and who would often go up to him and tell him that his daughter could be the next Mary Kom. "I knew nothing about the game," he says. "But the experts and coaches watching her play would tell me that she could be the next big thing in boxing. She is a southpaw, which I thought was a drawback, but I later learnt that this would actually work to her advantage." Jai Bhagwan may not have always been convinced by what everyone said, but tended to believe them nevertheless, and never let Nitu give up.

Jai Bhagwan's wife Mukesh remembers how Nitu, the naughtiest of her three children, would bully her younger sister Tamanna, now a second-year MBBS student in Shimla, and brother Akshit. In her telling, this was what prompted her father to enrol Nitu in the boxing academy.

Mukesh wasn't fully on board initially, worrying that Nitu would sustain facial injuries while competing, thereby hampering her marital prospects. The financial strain on account of Nitu's training and her sister's education too was a source of anxiety. "We borrowed money from relatives to buy a buffalo worth ₹2.5 lakh so that Nitu could get the right diet. Her father has been on leave without pay for the last seven years. Since travelling to the academy twice a day on a motorcycle was not feasible, especially during monsoons and winters, he had to buy a small car. Neighbours and relatives would point out that we were incurring too much expenditure on the girls. I don't even remember the last time I bought a new suit-salwar for myself," says Mukesh, her back to a wall from which patches of green paint are peeling off. A bare cot lies in a corner.

A nasty shoulder injury in 2019 felt like the end of her career, says Nitu. But she came back to the ring after treatment in Chennai for a month. "We did not let the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic impact her training and bought her a punching bag to practise at home. Instead of going to the academy, she would practise in the fields with me during the lockdown. I repeatedly told her during the injury that she would return stronger and that her best was yet to come," says Jai Bhagwan.

As she offers sweets and tea to the guests trickling in, Mukesh stresses that apart from making sacrifices, changing mindsets is important. "Those who would advise us not to waste effort and money on Nitu's training are now sending their daughters to her for advice. The girls are raring to go. We are the ones who need to change the way we think," she says.

From Page One

Centre tells States to do more COVID tests

The Health Ministry said that the World Health Organisation (WHO) is closely tracking one variant of interest, XBB.1.5, and six other variants are under monitoring: BQ.1, BA.2.75, CH.1.1, XBB, XBF and XBB.1.16. The prevalence of XBB.1.16 increased from 21.6% in February to 35.8% in March. However, no evidence of an increase in hospitalisation or mortality has been reported.

The Minister said that while India has achieved over 90% coverage of primary vaccination, the coverage of precaution doses is very low. He advised States to ramp up vaccination of the eligible population, especially the elderly and vulnerable groups.At the review meeting, Dr. Mandaviya urged States to be on the alert and be well-prepared for COVID-19 management, directing State Health Ministers to conduct mock drills of hospital infrastructure on April 10 and 11 and to review health preparedness with district administrations and health officials on April 8 and 9.

T.N. nod for graft case probe against ex-CM

The main aim is to ascertain the availability of substantial evidence for registration of a case or initiation of disciplinary proceedings, the sources said. A case relating to the allegations of corruption in road projects, involving Mr. Palaniswami, is also under investigation by the DVAC. Though the Madras High Court ordered a CBI probe into it, the order was set aside by the Supreme Court.

In the PWD case, the DVAC found materials against public servants, contractors and others in the construction of medical college buildings in Krishnagiri, Tiruvallur, Ariyalur, Kallakurichi, Namakkal, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar, Dindigul, Nagapattinam, Tirupur and the Nilgiris. The allegation is that the buildings were constructed in violation of the National Medical Commission's norms and the work was awarded to select contractors. The agency had reasons to suspect the role of Mr. Palaniswami in the conspiracy to swindle public money, the sources said.

Senior citizens pay over ₹1 lakh crore in tax

Kuldip Kumar, personal tax expert and former national leader of the global mobility practice at PwC India, said, "It could be that the new entrants into the senior citizens' category in recent years have retired with higher incomes and savings relative to their peers who quit the workforce earlier."

Moreover, as fixed deposit returns remained low in the past, that may have nudged these taxpayers to move some savings into equities and mutual funds in the quest for better returns. Such investors did see a surge in valuations, particularly those who would have invested around the time when the market took a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who cashed out would have paid capital gains taxes, Mr. Kumar added. The same quest for returns may have pushed more senior citizens to rely on dividend incomes from stocks, emphasised Aravind Srivatsan, tax leader at Nangia Andersen.

Discordant notes threaten to ruin Oppn. unity in run-up to 2024 polls

After Sharad Pawar backs industrialist Gautam Adani in the Hindenburg issue, Congress says 'NCP may have its view but 19 like-minded Opposition parties are convinced that the PM-linked Adani Group issue is real and very serious'

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Just a day after the Budget Session that ended with a chorus of Opposition unity, discordant notes from NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar and many others threaten to ruin the pitch. In a television interview, Mr. Pawar, backing industrialist Gautam Adani, said that he was "targeted" and that the demand for a probe by Joint Parliamentary Committee is futile with the BJP majority in Parliament.

In an interview to news channel *NDTV*, Mr. Pawar, raised questions about the "background" of U.S.-based short seller- Hindenburg group which in a report accused the Adani Group of stock manipulation and round-tripping funds. "One foreign firm or individual made a statement and this created an uproar in the country. There was a ruckus in Parliament over the issue. We had never heard of them before this report. What is their background? And what will be cost of this ruckus on the state of Indian economy? We can not disregard these things. It seems this was targeted," he said.

Since the allegations are against the BJP, it would be futile to investigate the same through a Joint Parliamentary Committee where BJP will be in majority, he added.

Mr. Pawar's statement has to be seen in the context of the recently concluded Budget Session of Parliament, where the Opposition displayed rare unity with 20 parties coming together for a flag march on the last day.

Congress rebuts

The Congress was quick to rebut Mr. Pawar's statement. Congress general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh, speaking to *The Hindu*, said, "The NCP may have its view but 19 like-minded Opposition parties are convinced that the PM-linked Adani Group issue is real and very serious. But all 20 like-minded Opposition parties, including NCP, are united and will be together in saving the Constitution and our democracy from BJP's assaults and in defeating the BJP's divisive and destructive political, social and economic agenda."

Differing views: The NCP chief recently said it would be futile to investigate the Adani-Hindenburg issue through a Joint Parliamentary Committee where BJP will be in majority. FILE PHOTO

However, Mr. Pawar is not the only one queering the pitch. Cracks surface in the tenuous connections between the Opposition parties at the slightest provocation. BRS leader K. Keshav Rao bristled at a question on whether former Congress president Rahul Gandhi could be the consensus Prime Ministerial candidate for the 2024 general elections at a joint Opposition press conference on Thursday, where leaders from 20 parties sat together at the dais, reminding the reporters about "distance and differences" among the parties.

Mr. Rao berated the reporters, asking them to let go of their "obsession" with the leadership issue. "A nation will certainly be led by a person, led by a combination of ideologies and programmes. What we are trying to do is to see that kind of programme is on the board that we are all on the same page."

More voices emerge

The Left parties, which enthusiastically support the Opposition unity cause, also expressed concern over the Congress's stinginess in sharing space in Karnataka where they are the dominant force. "In Karnataka, the Congress could have easily conceded a seat or two for us but since they see themselves at striking distance of victory, they outrightly refused to accommodate us," a Left leader said on the sidelines of the same press conference.

During the session, the Trinamool Congress, which has been vocal about not being part of any formations led by the Congress, joined the Opposition rank, participating in strategy meetings and marches. The Shiv Sena (Udhav Thackeray), however, went into a sulk over Mr. Gandhi's Savarkar remarks. The feud was resolved overnight, with Mr. Pawar playing the peacemaker, but it underlined the razor-thin path on which the Opposition parties have to tread together for the next 12 months – between ideological pitfalls and regional interests – to stay united for the general elections in May 2024.

Congress chief calls Nitish, Stalin and Uddhav

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has spoken to top Opposition leaders, including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in the past two or three days to carry forward the theme of Opposition unity in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

A source said Mr. Kharge's calls to the leaders were to explore the possibility of having a joint meet to carry forward the theme of Opposition unity that was witnessed after Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from the Lok Sabha. Though the Congress didn't officially comment on the agenda of these phone calls, they are being seen as the first step to discussing the possibility of a pre-poll alliance in Maharashtra Bihar and Tamil Nadu that have as many as 127 Lok Sabha seats.

"It was a follow-up of what was discussed and agreed to in the dinner hosted for floor leaders of the other Opposition parties at Kharge *ji*'s residence on March 27," the source said, adding, "It is work in progress."

Allotment of a caste code for third gender in Bihar survey sparks controversy

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

The allotment of a caste code for the third gender as part of the ongoing caste survey has triggered a row in Bihar, with activists and transgender persons condemning the move.

The second phase of the survey is scheduled to be held from April 15 to May 15. For the enumeration process, a caste code of 22 has been allotted for the 'third gender'.

In the survey form, 215 codes have been allotted to different castes. For Brahmins it is 126, Bhumihars 142 and Rajputs 169. Codes have also been allotted to religions, children born to inter-faith couples, and even to professions such as doctors and lawyers.

"How can gender be considered as a caste? Can members belonging to the transgender community be of any particular caste? Can a male or female be considered as caste," asked Reshma Prasad, a transwoman and former secretary of Dostana Safar, a Patna-based organisation.

Questions raised: The second phase of the survey is scheduled to be held from April 15 to May 15. PTI

"It's a criminal act by the government, it is against the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules which talks about the prevention of discrimination of transgender persons."

She said the the Social Welfare Department must intervene and "rectify the column identifying the members of the third gender as a caste in the form".

As per the 2011 Census, the total population of transgender persons in the State was 40,827.

Minister's reply

Bihar's Social Welfare Minister Madan Sahni said, "If they [members of the third gender] have any issues, they must contact the department concerned and discuss their grievances with senior officials there... The government, though, has taken several welfare measures for improving their [transgender community] social-economic condition."

SGPC flags 'wrong details' about Sikhs in NCERT book

Press Trust of India
AMRITSAR

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on Friday claimed that the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has misrepresented historical details related to Sikhs in its Political Science syllabus book of Class 12.

SGPC chief Harjinder Singh Dhami said in a statement that the NCERT recorded "misleading information" about the Anandpur Sahib resolution in Chapter-8, namely Regional Aspirations, of its book *Politics In India Since Independence*, which has hurt the sentiments of the community.

Explaining the 1973 resolution, he said it talked about the State's rights and strengthening the federal structure.

"It is not at all justified to portray Sikhs as separatists, so the NCERT should remove such highly objectionable mentions," Dhami said.

Deletions in textbooks guided by 'divisive motives', say historians

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Around 250 historians from leading Indian and foreign universities have issued a public statement against changes made in the textbooks issued by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), which include dropping entire chapters on history of Mughal courts, references to the 2002 Gujarat riots, the Naxalite movement, and mention of Dalit writers.

The institutes include Indira Gandhi National Open University, Jadavpur University, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Columbia University, and Princeton University.

"The recent decision of the NCERT to drop entire chapters from the history textbooks for Class 12, as well as from other classes and to delete statements from other textbooks is a matter of deep concern," the historians said.

"In the revised version, while the chapter on the Mughals has been deleted, the chapter on the Vijayanagara Empire has been retained. The exclusion exposes the wider communal undertones, based on an inaccurate assumption about India's past – that the religion of the rulers was the dominant religion of the times. This leads to the deeply problematic idea of a 'Hindu' era, 'Muslim' era, etc. These categories are uncritically imposed on what has historically been a very diverse social fabric."

"The chapters deleted from the history textbook are precisely those which do not fit into the pseudo-historical schema of the ruling dispensation," they said. "We are appalled by the decision of the NCERT to remove chapters and statements from the history textbooks, and demand that the deletions from the textbooks should be immediately withdrawn. The decision of the NCERT is guided by divisive motives," the historians said.

Ukrainian Minister to visit Delhi next week for talks

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

In the first such visit since the Russia-Ukraine war began last February, the government will hold talks next week with a senior Ukrainian Minister, who is likely to invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit Kiev.

Diplomatic sources said the final arrangements are still being discussed, but confirmed that Emine Dzhaparova, the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, is expected to arrive in Delhi on Monday and hold an inter-ministerial dialogue as well as engage with media and think tanks in the Capital, with a view to building support for Ukraine in India.

Ukraine has requested India for more humanitarian aid and both sides are also expected to discuss its delivery.

According to the sources, Ms. Dzhaparova will expand on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's "10-point Peace Formula" during her talks, calling on India to add its "crucial global voice" to building a consensus in its favour.

In a conversation with Mr. Modi in December 2022, the Ukrainian President had reportedly invited India to be one of the "security guarantors" for a future peace process. Ms. Dzhaparova will now call upon India to send a "strong message for peace" directly to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is due to visit India in early July for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

In addition, Ukraine is keen to receive an invitation to participate in G-20 meetings being held under India's Presidency, and for Mr. Zelensky to be invited to speak to G-20 leaders during the summit.

Ms. Dzhaparova's visit comes less than a month before Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit for the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting.

'Sweeping powers to PIB amounts to censorship'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) has attacked the Union government for amending the IT Rules 2021 and giving "sweeping powers" to the Press Information Bureau (PIB), to fact-check information about the Centre on social media, and termed it a form of "censorship".

"Such sweeping powers to the PIB are tantamount to outright censorship, affecting all users of these platforms. This is totally anti-democratic and unacceptable," the Polit Bureau said in a statement.

Withdraw 'draconian' amendment to IT Rules, says Editors Guild

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Editors Guild of India on Friday again urged the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to withdraw the notification empowering the fact-check unit of the Public Information Bureau (PIB) to flag any content related to the Union government as fake, false or misleading and order its take down from online platforms.

In a statement, the Guild expressed concern over the amendment to the IT Rules notified by the Ministry on Thursday, stating that they will have deeply adverse implications for press freedom in the country. Terming it draconian, it also urged the Ministry to conduct consultations with media organisations and press bodies.

The Guild said the Rules were akin to censorship. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"There is no mention of what will be the governing mechanism for such a fact-checking unit, the judicial oversight, the right to appeal, or adherence to the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court of India in '*Shreya Singhal vs Union of India*' case, with respect to take down of content or blocking of social media handles. All this is against principles of natural justice and akin to censorship," the Guild said.

It said the Ministry notified the amendment without any "meaningful consultation that it had promised after it withdrew the earlier draft amendments it had put out in January 2023".

RSS chief says Hindu gurus did more social work than missionaries

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said Hindu spiritual gurus in the southern parts of the country had done more social service than Christian missionaries.

Mr. Bhagwat was speaking during the inauguration of Seva Sangam of the Rashtriya Seva Bharati – the service wing of RSS – in Jaipur.

"When we say service, most of the intellectual people generally take the name of missionaries. Missionary organisations run various institutions, schools and hospitals all over the world. But the social service done by Hindu spiritual gurus in the southern parts of the country is much more than that of the missionaries," he said.

He said national service along with national security should be the utmost priority of every Indian. "Missionary practice always tried to circumscribe the efforts of Indian culture, but there has been several examples where the Indian saints proved them wrong," he said.

MHA to provide financial assistance to prison inmates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The scheme involves monetary aid to poor inmates who cannot afford the penalty or the bail amount

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said on Friday that it would provide States with financial support to help underprivileged prisoners who are unable to get bail or secure release from prisons due to financial hardship.

In line with one of the announcements of the Union Budget, 'Support for Poor Prisoners', the scheme envisages "financial support to poor persons who are in prisons and unable to afford the penalty or the bail amount".

The MHA said the scheme will enable underprivileged prisoners, majority of whom belong to socially disadvantaged or marginalised groups with lower education and income levels, to get out of prison.

"To further strengthen the process, technology-driven solutions will be put in place to ensure that benefits reach the poor prisoners; reinforcing the e-prisons platform; strengthening of District Legal Services Authority and sensitisation and capacity building of stakeholders to ensure that quality legal aid is made available to needy poor prisoners, etc.," the Ministry said.

It said that prisons are an important part of the criminal justice system, and play a significant role in upholding the rule of law.

According to the Prisons Statistics of India Report, 2021, over 5.54 lakh people were lodged in prison and the total capacity of the jails in India was about 4.25 lakh, an occupancy rate of 130%.

House panel apprised of collusive threat from China and Pakistan

China has grown from having 250 ships to over 350 in just over a decade, Navy representative says in submission to Parliamentary standing committee; Islamabad's maritime force projected to expand by 50% with help from Beijing

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Strong defence: While the Indian Navy's fleet is growing, it must further expand capacity, officials said. ANI

The Indian Navy currently has a strength of around 130 ships and submarines and while the target is to have a 200-ship Navy, given the current trajectory, it is likely to have 155-160 ships, Chief of Defence Staff and Secretary, Department of Military Affairs, General Anil Chauhan has said in a submission to the Parliamentary standing committee on defence.

The Chinese Navy, with around 355 ships, has grown to be the world's largest Navy in terms of numbers. The committee was apprised of the possible collusive threat from both China and Pakistan and the former's role in expansion of the Pakistan's Navy.

"The Indian Navy's strength today is about 131 ships... Our plan is to build the Navy to around 200 ships. But the way we are going now, we will reach between 155-160. In terms of pure numbers, they are very less. However, a few factors have to be kept in mind as these issues are dependent on geography...," Gen. Chauhan said in the report.

As per the standing committee report tabled in Parliament in the just-concluded session, Gen. Chauhan said that in four-five years, the Chinese Navy will have a strength of about 555 ships. The name of China or Pakistan weren't directly mentioned and left blank in the report while describing them.

The Indian Navy currently has 143 aircraft and 130 helicopters. In addition, 43 ships and submarines are under construction at various shipyards, while initial approval exists for the indigenous construction of 51 ships, six submarines and 111 Naval Utility Helicopters.

While noting that the number of assets required for various types of aircraft is calculated based on Indian Navy's envisaged tasks and missions, available surface assets, areas of interest and other factors are promulgated in the Long-Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP) 2012-27, the committee noted, "However, there is a shortfall of planes and helicopters for reconnaissance and transport, which is being mitigated through progressive procurement."

A Navy representative said in the submission to the committee that in just over a decade, China has grown from having 250 navy ships to more than 350 and has become the largest navy in the world.

Along with their numbers, their operations have expanded and at any point of time, five to nine of their ships are operating in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and their research vessels are also operating, which can influence our security, the representative said.

From now to 2030, the Pakistani Navy is projected to expand by 50% with China playing the biggest role in the expansion. Hence, it is imperative that the Indian Navy expand its capability, the representative added.

The committee, in this regard, want to state that the Ministry should assess the threat perception which has increased many folds in view of hostile nations in the neighbourhood and the increase in trade in the Indian Ocean Region, the report said.

HAL's third production line for LAC inaugurated

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane on Friday inaugurated the third production line of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) set up by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) at Nashik in Maharashtra.

He handed over 10 Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft repaired and overhauled (ROH) by the HAL to the Indian Air Force.

"The new production line will enable the company to enhance LCA-MK1A production capacity from 16 to 24 aircraft per year. HAL's Nashik Division has achieved peak overhaul capacity of 20 Su-30 aircraft per year despite having supply chain issues in current geopolitical situations," C. B. Ananthakrishnan, Chairman and Managing Director, HAL, said.

The HAL has already set up two LCA manufacturing lines in Bengaluru.

E-monitoring roads: unpaid fines driving govt. rethink

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Four years after the introduction of a law enabling the electronic monitoring of roads and highways to prevent fatalities and accidents, the government in the Supreme Court is accepting that its implementation has potholes which require mending.

One of the blind spots in the implementation of Section 136A (electronic monitoring and enforcement of road safety) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 is integral to its success and survival – to make sure that errant vehicle owners pay the traffic fines issued through e-challans.

Statistics presented before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Thursday showed that only a miniscule 7.61% of drivers who were issued challans electronically have bothered to pay the fine in the past four years till March 10, 2023. A total 3.98 crore e-challans were issued in this period in smart cities across the country. These challans were worth a total of ₹3,877.36 crore in fines for various traffic offences.

Whopping number: The 'unrealised' amount of traffic fines issued through e-challans is ₹3,582.1 crore. FILE PHOTO

However, the authorities have only been able to collect ₹295.26 crore.

The "unrealised" amount of traffic fines issued through e-challans remains a whopping ₹3,582.1 crore.

"The impact of the entire exercise of electronic monitoring and e-challans stands substantially reduced by considerably less recovery of e-challan amounts, which was in fact intended to deter vehicle owners from committing traffic rule violations," petitioner Kishan Chand Jain has submitted.

The government seems to have geared towards action now, as per a report filed by the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety through amicus curiae Gaurav Agrawal.

Detailed guidelines

The report said the Road Ministry has, in several meetings held with the apex court committee, indicated that it would take up the "exercise of standardisation and bring out detailed guidelines to integrate software and hardware with e-vahan/e-challan".

The case before the apex court had also proposed evolving a 'one nation-one challan system' with a view to integrate the inter-State systems to effectively e-challan inter-State motor vehicles.

'Dynastic politics in danger, not democracy'

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday attacked Opposition parties for disrupting Parliament, saying that a myth is being created that democracy is at risk while in fact it is dynastic politics that is in danger.

Addressing a gathering on the sidelines of Kaushambi Mahotsav on Friday, he claimed that the people of Uttar Pradesh and India were determined to make Narendra Modi the Prime Minister again in 2024.

"Budget session of Parliament ended without proper discussion, which never happened previously. Opposition MPs didn't allow the Houses of Parliament to function... Rahulji insulted India abroad. The people of the country understand that democracy is not at risk; it is dynastic politics which is in danger as Modiji defeated these dynastic parties," said Mr. Shah, adding that the BJP would get over 300 seats in 2024.

Mr. Shah also addressed a gathering in Azamgarh, while launching various development projects.

Himachal considering legalising cultivation of cannabis, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Friday said the State government was considering legalising the cultivation of cannabis.

"It (cannabis cultivation) would play a significant role in generating revenue for the State. Besides, it would be beneficial to patients as it has many medicinal properties. It can be used for industrial purposes as well," Mr. Sukhu said in Shimla.

The Chief Minister said the State government was cautious about the potential increase in drug use and had formed a five-member committee of MLAs.

Controlled cultivation of cannabis has been permitted in Uruguay, Austria, and the U.S.

"The committee will conduct a thorough study about each and every aspect related to cannabis cultivation in the State. The committee will visit areas where illegal cultivation of cannabis takes place, and submit a report within a month. Only on the basis of the report will the government take a decision," he said.

Mr. Sukhu said cannabis cultivation had been kept under the legal purview in several States.

"Neighbouring Uttarakhand became the first State in the country to legalise cannabis cultivation in 2017. Controlled cultivation is being done in some districts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, controlled cultivation of cannabis has been permitted in several countries such as Uruguay, Canada, the U.S., Austria, and Belgium," he said.

The Chief Minister said the government would consider all aspects, including regulatory measures, and will study the models followed by other States that have legalised cannabis cultivation before taking the final call.

Twitter withholds post on Home Minister globally

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In an apparent first, Twitter appears to have withheld a tweet globally in response to a "legal demand" in India. Journalist and Right to Information (RTI) activist Saurav Das posted a screenshot of two past tweets, one of which appears to quote Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah, with a message from the social media platform stating that the content has been "withheld in Worldwide".

This is significant as Twitter has usually restricted access to posts following government requests only in the territory where such content is demanded to be blocked. The only instances where content has also been taken down globally is when it also violates Twitter's own Terms of Service.

Twitter's Country Head for India Kanika Mittal and its director for Global Government Affairs for India Samiran Gupta didn't immediately respond to a query on the takedown. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITy) was not available for immediate comment late Friday.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, ग्रामीण वृत, जोधपुर
क्रमांक: 4444 दिनांक: 27.03.2023
निविदा सूचना संख्या : 13 वर्ष 2022-23
NIB No. PWD2223A4935
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से विभिन्न डामर एवं सी. सी. सड़क निर्माण कार्य हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/ केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/ डाक एवं दूर संचार विभाग/ रेलवे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के उपयुक्त श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में कुल 06 पैकेज/ कार्य जिनकी लागत राशि रु. 1940.00 लाख है के लिए ई-टेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है।

ऑनलाईन निविदा आवेदन डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की तारीख	:	03 अप्रेल 2023, 9.30 बजे से 26 अप्रेल, 2023 सायं 6.00 बजे तक

निविदा से संबंधित समस्त विवरण वेबसाईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in व http://sppp. rajasthan.gov.in व http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। सम्पूर्ण निविदा प्रक्रिया http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन सम्पादित की जायेगी। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाईट पर http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है। कार्यवार यूबीएन संख्या निम्नानुसार है।

1. PWD2223WSRC19821	2. PWD2223WSRC19824	3. PWD2223WSRC19830
4. PWD2223WSRC19832	5. PWD2223WSRC19833	6. PWD2223WSRC19835

डीआईपीआर/सी/5085/2023
(डी. आर. माधव), अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
सा.नि.वि. ग्रामीण वृत जोधपुर

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग, क्षेत्र बीकानेर
क्रमांक: अति/बी/अके/22-23/14669-690 दिनांक: 23.03.2023
ई-बोली सूचना संख्या अमुअ/बी/2022-23/108-109
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्न हस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिक विभाग एवं अन्य विभागों में सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नानुसार ई-बोली द्वारा बोली आमंत्रित की जाती है। बोली प्रपत्र वेबसाईट www.phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http:/eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर निम्नानुसार उपलब्ध है। इस निविदा सूचना संख्या अमुअ/बी/2022-23/108-109 में कुल 02 कार्य है, जिनकी कुल अनुमानित लागत रु. 769.10 लाख है।

क्र.सं.	निविदा संख्या	ऑनलाईन बिड डाउनलोड करना	ऑनलाईन बिड डालना	ऑनलाईन बिड खोलना
1	108-109/ 2022-23	दिनांक 24.03.2023 प्रातः 09.30 बजे से दिनांक 12.04.2023 सायं 18.00 बजे तक	दिनांक 24.03.2023 प्रातः 09.30 बजे से दिनांक 12.04.2023 सायं 18.00 बजे तक	13.04.2023 प्रातः 11.30 बजे

इन निविदाओं के एसपीपीपी पोर्टल पर यूबीएन नम्बर क्रमशः **PHE2223WSOB15055, PHE2223WSOB15064**
(दीपक बंसल)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता
जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग
क्षेत्र बीकानेर
डीआईपीआर/सी/5194/2023

JODHPUR VIDYUT VITARAN NIGAM LIMITED
Corporate Identity Number (CIN) –U40109RJ2000SGC016483, Regd. Office: New Power House, Jodhpur- 342003, Office of Superintending Engineer (IT)
E-mail : seit.jdvvnl@rajasthan.gov.in, Web site : www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

E-procurement tenders are invited from eligible bidders for **"To provide MPLS/IP-VPN/SD–WAN Communication Service and GPRS/3G/4G or Higher version Connectivity Service for SCADA for Jodhpur City"** under **TN-IT-36 (UBN No JVV2223SLOB00619)**.

Details regarding work, Tender cost, Earnest money/bid security, Date of tender opening etc. are available at our website **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jdvvnl** & **sppp.rajasthan.gov.in**. The bidders, in their own interest are requested to read very carefully the tender documents before submitting the bid only through on line on website **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**.

Raj.Samwad/C/23/239 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (IT)
बिजली संबंधी शिकायतों के लिए टोल फ्री नम्बर 1800 180 6045

RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)
C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur

RISL invites e-bids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./ Date/ Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost/ EMD	Start of sale /Last date
NIB No. F4.6(391)/ RISL/Tech/2023/57 dated 05.04.23 UBN No. : RIS2324GLOB00005	Request for Proposal (RFP) for procurement of AMC & new video conferencing infrastructure under RajVC project through open Competitive Bidding (e-tendering).	Rs. 95.00 Cr	06.04.2023 17.05.2023

Details can be seen on the websites **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in**, **http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in**, & **http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in**. Bids are to be submitted through **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**.

Raj.Samwad/C/23/246 G M - Technical

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SAMBALPUR (R&B) DIVISION No.II, SAMBALPUR
E-mail - eesbprnbdivision2@gmail.com; Phone -0663-2410104

BID IDENTIFICATION No. SE / R and B / SBP II / 01 (online) / 2023-24

No.1470 **E-Procurement Notice** /Dated. 04.04.2023

The **Executive Engineer, Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II, Sambalpur** on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites Percentage Rate bids in **Double cover System in ONLINE MODE.**

1. No. of work : 02 (two) nos building works
2. Tender Cost : Rs.10,000/-
3. Class of Contractor : "B" & "A" Class Contractors
4. Availability of bid document in the website : 18: 00 Hours of 14.04.2023 to 17: 00 Hours of 29.04.2023
5. Date of Opening of Tenders : 11.30 Hours on dt. 01.05.2023
6. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** only. Any Corrigendum / Addendum / Cancellation of tender will be displayed in the website said only..

Executive Engineer,
Sambalpur (R&B) Division No.II
B-38: OIPR-34136/11/0002/2324

राजस्थान सरकार
सामाजिक न्याय एवं अधिकारिता विभाग
अम्बेडकर भवन, जी 3/1, राजमहल रेजीडेन्सी क्षेत्र, जयपुर
क्रमांक : एफ 13 ( )अनु./कोचिंग/सान्याअवि/2021/299 जयपुर, दिनांक : 06.04.2023
विज्ञप्ति
मुख्यमंत्री अनुप्रति कोचिंग योजना-तर्गत विभिन्न प्रोफेशनल कोर्स एवं नौकरियों के लिए आयोजित होने वाली प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं की तैयारी उत्कृष्ट ढंग से कराने एवं समान अवसर प्रदान करने के लिए शैक्षणिक सत्र 2023-24 हेतु इच्छुक प्रतिष्ठित पंजीकृत कोचिंग संस्थाओं के प्रस्ताव एवं कोचिंग करने हेतु इच्छुक अभ्यर्थियों के ऑनलाईन आवेदन प्राप्त करने हेतु निम्नानुसार तिथियाँ निर्धारित की जाती है।

क्र.सं.	विषय वस्तु	निर्धारित दिनांक
1.	मुख्यमंत्री अनुप्रति कोचिंग योजना के अन्तर्गत इच्छुक कोचिंग संस्थाओं के नवीन/नवीनीकरण/ अतिरिक्त परीक्षाओं के प्रस्ताव ऑन लाईन किये जाने की तिथि	28 मार्च 2023 से 31 मार्च 2024
2	कोचिंग करने हेतु इच्छुक अभ्यर्थियों के ऑनलाईन आवेदन करने हेतु तिथि	06 अप्रेल 2023 से 20 अप्रेल 2023 तक

कोचिंग संस्थाओं द्वारा अपने प्रस्ताव एवं अभ्यर्थियों द्वार ऑनलाइन आवेदन sso portal (https://sso.rajasthan.gov.in) द्वारा SJMS SMS APP पर ऑनलाईन किये जा सकते हैं।
योजना के विस्तृत दिशा-निर्देश विभागीय वैबसाईट www.sje.rajasthan.gov.in पर उपलब्ध है।
(हरि मोहन मीना)
DIPR/C/5244/2023 निदेशक एवं संयुक्त शासन सचिव

INVITATION FOR AUCTION SALE ON BEHALF OF THE DEBT'S RECOVERY TRIBUNAL NO.1, AT ERNAKULAM, KERALA
SALE OF INDIAN FLAG VESSEL/CARGO SHIP "GREAT SEA VEMBANAD" PURSUANT TO THE ORDER OF THE DEBT'S RECOVERY TRIBUNAL No.I, AT ERNAKULAM DATED 24-03-2023 IN I.A.NO.474 OF 2022 IN O.A.No.407 OF 2015

Sealed tenders are invited for the sale of the Vessel/Cargo Ship "GREAT SEA VEMBANAD" presently berthed at the private yard of **M/s Tisha Navigation Private Limited, Small Craft building unit ,Holy Family Church, Munambam, Pallipuram P.O, Ernakulam-683515, Kerala, India**, for the recovery of arrears of loan and other charges.

MAIN PARTICULARS OF VESSEL/CARGO SHIP

Name : **Great Sea-Vembanad;** Port of Registry: **Kochi ;** Official Number : **4069;** Callsign: **AVXJ ;** IMO Number : **9680700;** Type of Vessel : **River Sea Vessel Type-3-Cargo ship other than Dredger and Tanker;** Length Overall : **59.03 M;** Maximum Breadth : **11.40 M;** Moulded Depth: **4.00 M ;** Design Draft: **2.80 M;** Dead Weight: **1036 MT;** Light Ship : **441.54 MT** Main Engine: **3 x 148 HP ALM 412, Triple Propeller with Twin rudder;** Generator: **2 x Kirloskar 82 KVA ;** Measurement of the hatch covers: **7 M x 5 M;** Total number of hatch Covers : **7 Nos;** Approximate weight of the each Hatch Covers: **8 MT** Total weight of the Hatch Covers: **56 MT;** Hatch Cover is located at Azhikkal Port, Kannur **WHEEL HOUSE:** Standard Magnetic Compass: **1,** Radar: **1 – 9 GHz SAMYUNG SMR 3700,** GPS: **1 – SAMYUNG SPR – 1400,** Rudder Angle Indicator: **Provided.** Echosounder : **1 – Hondex HE 770,** AIS : **1 – SAMYUNG,** Navtex receiver : **1 – SAMYUNG SNX – 300,** VHF Radio: **1 – STR 6000A,** MF/HF Transceiver: **1 – SAMYUNG SRG 1150DN** **ENGINE ROOM:** Main Engines: **3 x 148 HP Leyland ALM 412 Mark II,** Auxiliary Engines: **2 x 82 k V A Kirloskar** Emergency Generator (Located in The after part): **1 x 35 k V A Kirloskar,** Ballast/GS Pump : **2 x 37.5 k W, 80m3/hr,** Air Compressor : **2 x Wood peeker** Oily Water Separator : **1 x RWOGmbh,** Sewage Treatment Plant : **1 x Jonghap** Hatch Cover (9 m x 5 m x 7 nos): **8 M T each (Located at Azhikkal Port, Kannur)** Estimated Value: **Rs. 2,45,50,000/- (Rupees Two Crores Forty Five Lakhs Fifty thousand only),** EMD : **Rs. 24,55,000/- (Rupees Twenty Four Lakhs Fifty five thousand only)** Costs of Tender Documents: **Rs.3,000/-(Rupees Three thousand only)** Vessel/Cargo ship open for Inspection on: **27-03-2023 to 20-04-2023,** **Between 11.00 AM to 5.00PM** Last date for receiving the Tenders: **24-04-2023** Date and Time of opening the tenders: **25-04-2023 at 11.30 AM** The Tender document may be purchased from **Adv. Abu Mathew Advocate Commissioner** by non refundable Demand Draft of **Rs.3,000/- (Rupees Three thousand only)** drawn in favour of the **Registrar Debts Recovery Tribunal No.I, Ernakulam, Kerala payable at Ernakulam.** Terms and Conditions: **The sale is on " AS IS WHAT IS AND AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION ONLY " More details about the Terms and Conditions are mentioned in the Tender Form.**

For more details contact: Ph: 9188901924, 9188901926

Date: 26-03-2023, Place: Ernakulam Sd/- Adv. Abu Mathew, Advocate Commissioner.

E-mail: eeroads.khr@rediffmail.com
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION: KHARIAR, DIST. NUAPADA, ODISHA
1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No.11/2022-23, EE (R&B), Khariar
No.1743 // Date 05.04.2023

The following changes are being made to the **Bid Identification No.11/2022-23, EE (R&B) Khariar** for the work **" Implementation of "AMA HOSPITAL" at DHH, Nuapada under 5T transformation for the year 2022-23 "** & **" Implementation of "AMA HOSPITAL" at SDH Khariar, District Nuapada under 5T Transformation for the year 2022-23 ".**

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	as per NIT		Modified as per 1st Corrigendum	
		Provision	EMD	Provision	EMD
1.	"Implementation of **"AMA HOSPITAL" at DHH, Nuapada** under 5T transformation for the year 2022-23"	4.02	4,02,500.00/-	4.13	4,13,500.00/-
2.	"Implementation of **"AMA HOSPITAL" at SDH Khariar**, District Nuapada under 5T Transformation for the year 2022-23.	2.15	2,15,000.00/-	2.19	2,19,500.00/-

All other terms and conditions of Notice remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division.
B-34 : OIPR-34062/11/0002/2324

INBRIEF

64 trains cancelled as Kurmi groups' stir enters third day

At least 64 express and passenger trains in were cancelled on Friday, owing to agitation by different Kurmi organisations blocking train tracks in the important Kharagpur-Tatanagar and Adra-Chandil sections of South Eastern Railway that have been continuing for three days, an SER official said. Both long distance and local passengers have been suffering immensely owing to the rail blockade in West Bengal by different Kurmi organisations, who have been agitating over a string of demands including recognition as a scheduled tribe, recognition of Sarna religion and inclusion of Kurmali language in the eighth schedule of the Constitution. PTI

'Badly dressed' girls look like Shurpanakha, says BJP leader

Girls in "bad dresses" look like Shurpanakha of the Ramayana, BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya has said. A video of his remarks, made at a religious function organised in Indore on the occasion of Hanuman and Mahavir Jayanti on Thursday, went viral on social media. "We see goddess in women. But (with) the kind of bad dresses the girls wear and move around, they do not embody goddess but look like Shurpanakha. God has given you good and beautiful body.....dress well, friends," the BJP leader said. In the popular version of the Ramayana, Shurpanakha is the sister of the demon king Ravana. PTI

'India is set to impact the world with G-20 Presidency'

India has been playing an increasingly pivotal role in the international arena and is set to further impact the world as the President of the G-20 this year, Park Jin, Foreign Minister of South Korea, said during his visit to New Delhi on Friday. "India has also demonstrated to the world its cultural prowess with its recent Oscar wins and I must say the *Natu Natu* song and dance has captivated the world," he added. Speaking at an event welcoming the Minister, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said Automobile giant Hyundai is a symbol of India-South Korea relations. Mr. Jin will visit the Hyundai plant in Chennai which is one of the largest automobile centres of the South Korean automaker.

Navjot Singh Sidhu calls on Congress president

Friday was a day of meetings for top leaders of the Congress, as Navjot Singh Sidhu called on party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, general secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal and communication chief Jairam Ramesh. "9 Times MLA, Thrice Member Parliament, Champion for the cause of underprivileged, voice of truth ..... Credibility thy name is Mallikarjun Kharge," tweeted Mr. Sidhu after meeting Mr. Kharge. Former Rajya Sabha member Anand Sharma and Chhattisgarh Minister T.S. Singhdeo called on Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi at her residence.

Common medical devices face risk of malware attacks

Experts warn that such connected health devices with software components can leak data and urge the government to put in cybersecurity measures to protect hospital databases

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Common medical devices such as oximeters, hearing aids, glucometers, and pacemakers can be turned into spyware and malware, say experts, warning that such devices can even leak your medical data if not layered with adequate cyber protection. Industry experts are now seeking urgent Central government intervention to recognise this threat and immediately put in place measures to plug any possible drain.

Their warning comes close on the heels of the ransomware attacks suffered by India's top tertiary care hospitals, leading to the siege of millions of medical records and vast amounts of health data at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Safdarjung Hospital and Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospitals. A ransomware attack is a computer virus that encrypts one's essential files and renders them inaccessible unless the hacker is paid for the key to open them.

Vulnerable area: India is one of the world's top 20 markets for medical devices. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"What these attacks indicate is our vulnerability," said Shuchin Bajaj, founder director of the Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals, adding that these electronic health records contain one of the most valuable databases of knowledge: patient information.

Connected to cloud

Now, experts are warning that it is not only large healthcare establishments that are under threat. Many personal use medical technology devices contain software as medical device (SaMD) and software in medical devices (SiMD) and are usually connected to the internet, mobile phones, servers, and the cloud.

"If not given adequate cyber protection, these devices can be turned into spyware and malware and can even breach data. Currently, there are no guidelines on the regulation of SaMD and SiMD. Therefore, we suggest that the government should consult with industry experts to identify the challenges that could pose a risk to national security," warned Pavan Choudary, chairman, Medical Technology Association of India.

India currently lacks any centralised data collection mechanism, which gives an exact cost of data corruption for the healthcare industry. However, it is clear that data is seeing a threat that has become rampant, sophisticated, and severe, said Arushi Jain, director, Akums Drugs and Pharmaceuticals.

"Pharma companies face their IT environment being landed with legacy hardware and software. In particular, operational technology devices, networks and systems that support business did not have IT security in mind when built. These networks and systems need to connect with IT networks, which exposes them to an organisation's entire threat landscape and creates new opportunities for cyber criminals," she explained.

Data governance

Data protection is not rocket science but requires legal and technical artisanship, allocation of adequate resources and training of all professionals involved in the processing of personal data, says the World Health Organisation (Europe). It advocates for continuous effort that is based on an institutional vision, a governance concept and a willingness to be accountable.

Database on 10,000 genomes to be ready for research access

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

While the project has sequenced 7,000 genomes, 3,000 of them are available for public access

The Genome India Project, a Centre-backed initiative to sequence 10,000 Indian human genomes and create a database, is about two-thirds through, said Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

"We have sequenced close to 7,000 genomes and 3,000 of these are already available for public access by researchers. We expect the 10,000 genomes to be completely sequenced by the end of the year," Mr. Gokhale said at a conference organised by the Association of Biotech-Led Enterprises (ABLE), an industry group, on Friday.

About 20 institutions across India are involved in the project though the analysis and coordination is done out of the Centre for Brain Research, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

The Indian population of 1.3 billion consists of over 4,600 population groups, and many of them are endogamous. Thus, the Indian population harbours distinct variations and often many disease-causing mutations are amplified within some of these groups. Therefore, findings from population-based or disease-based human genetics research from other populations of the world cannot be extrapolated to Indians, says a note from the IISc.

Creating a database of Indian genomes means that researchers anywhere can learn about genetic variants that are unique to India's population groups and use that to customise drugs and therapies.

"It is necessary to create public infrastructure such as genomic databases - similar to what the Information Technology industry has created - for India's biotechnology sector to expand and have more valuable companies and start-ups," said Vijay Chandru, co-founder, Strand Life Sciences, and former president, ABLE.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, ABLE co-founder, said that building such genomic-database infrastructure must involve greater "public-private partnerships".

Exploring habitat is natural, says official on 'straying' cheetah

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Cheetahs released into the wild are exploring their habitat and it is a very good sign, a senior Environment Ministry official has said after a spotted feline strayed out of Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park recently.

Oban, one of the eight cheetahs brought from Namibia in September last year, strayed out of the park on April 2. State forest officials on Friday said it was rescued from a forest area in a neighbouring Shivpuri district on Thursday evening and released into the park again.

Additional Director General of Forests S.P. Yadav told *PTI* that such movement of cheetahs was a natural phenomenon and there was nothing to worry about.

Oban, the cheetah that strayed into an agricultural field near Kuno National Park.

"Four cheetahs have been released completely. They are free ranging in the wild. Their movement is natural. We are happy that cheetahs are moving and exploring the areas and based on the exploration they identify their suitable habitat," he said.

The senior official said the government had appointed "Cheetah mitras" to familiarise the local populations with the felines and minimise potential conflicts.

Mission to map rural India's cultural assets covers over one lakh villages

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

In a bid to harness the unique cultural heritage of rural India, the government has identified and documented distinctive features of more than one lakh villages across the country.

In this cultural asset mapping, villages have been broadly divided into seven-eight categories based on whether they are important ecologically, developmentally or scholastically, if they produce a famous textile or product, and if they are connected to some historical or mythological events such as the Independence struggle or epics like the *Mahabharata*.

The ecological category, for example, includes the Bishnoi village near Jodhpur in Rajasthan, which is a case study for living in harmony with nature, and Uttarakhand's Raini village, which is famous for the Chipko movement.

Video dossier: Modhera in Gujarat has been showcased for being the first solar-powered village in India. REUTERS

There are also villages that have developmental importance like Modhera in Gujarat, which is the first solar-powered village in India.

Suketi in Himachal Pradesh, Asia's oldest fossil park, and Pandrethan in Kashmir, the village of Shaivite mystic Lal Ded, are also classified for their historical importance.

The entire exercise has been carried out under the *Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar* (My Village My Heritage) programme of the National Mission for Cultural Mapping (NMCM).

The NMCM aims to develop a comprehensive database of art forms, artists and other resources across the country. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) said it has undertaken the cultural asset mapping of these villages through field surveys.

"Detailed field surveys were carried out by joint teams of the Culture Ministry and the Common Services Centres (CSC), under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MEITY) to create the dossiers," Molly Kaushal, Director of the NMCM programme told *The Hindu*.

The survey documents the cultural identity of the villages by involving citizens to share what makes their village, Block or district unique.

The survey process involves a CSC Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE) conducting meetings with locals and then uploading interesting facts about their village, its places of interest, customs and traditions, famous personalities, festivals and beliefs, art and culture, etc., on to a special application.

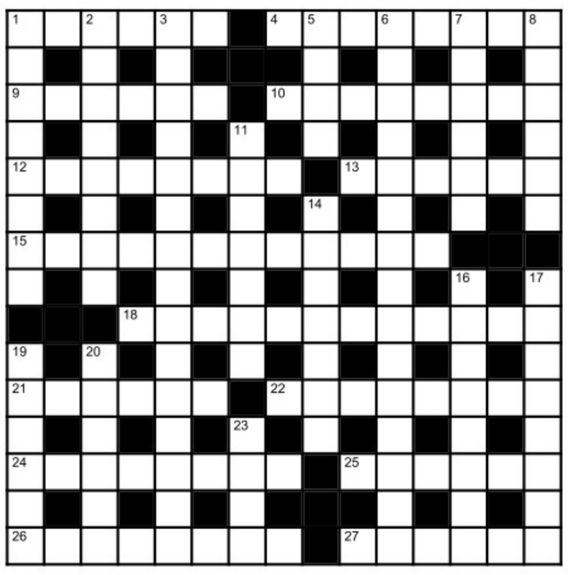
The IGNCA plans to cover all the 6.5 lakh villages in the country.

TH CROSSWORD + 13834

(set by Arden)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Instruction to keep reading — remains within language (6)
4 Land bird stuck in boat at sea (8)
9 Lifetime of work done over preserving continental unity (6)
10 One against excluding lascivious song and dance on the streets (8)
12 Stark naked when employed as a spy here... (2,3,3)
13 ...maybe many actively involved using fictitious name (6)
15 Popular programme's open — could start morning time (6,6)
18 Don't read a novel — get 'bull's eye!' (4,2,6)
21 Like the man in the middle, one follows path of non-violence (6)
22 Roll! Action! It's a party! (3-5)
24 Killing in service area (8)
25 Newspaper coverage of loot returned as bribe (6)
26 Old man maybe roped in if attractive (4-4)
27 Starts using another cap entering heaven (6)

Down

1 Land for profits, as they say (8)
2 Moving South, suspended money coming in (8)
3 Scene of serious accident in Delhi — streamline movement (5,4,6)
5 After one round picked up round stone (4)
6 Fan assaulted and ran away — things often get a bit shaky around here (3,7,5)
7 Let out after a day in the beginning (6)
8 With a metal frame light is restricted, still burning (6)
11 Identification mark will reveal something fishy inside (3,4)
14 Force to reduce mass at the top, or is it in the stomach? (7)
16 Gear up and go out if you're between eighteen or twenty years old, say (3,5)
17 Awkwardly ask to save some money — a small amount of money (8)
19 Holy book's restricted debate on earth, perhaps (6)
20 Treat as if it's business failure (6)
23 Song makes girl lose her head (4)

SUDOKU

8			6	2		4		
		6			8			
			3				9	8
	1			3				
9	2			8			7	6
				7			1	
6	3				2			
			1			9		
		5		4	9			2

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

No.SS5762 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle

	B	O	O	L	E	A	N	A	L	G	E	B	R	A
T		F		O		C		S		R		E		N
H	E	F	T	Y		E	N	S	N	A	R	L	E	D
I		S		A		T		E		P		L		A
C	A	P	E	L	L	A		T	H	E	R	E	I	N
K		R				M				S				T
O	G	I	V	E		I	R	O	N	H	O	R	S	E
		N		V		D		P		O		I		
M	A	G	D	A	L	E	N	E		T	H	O	N	G
A				P				R				G		A
L	A	S	T	O	U	T		A	L	L	E	R	G	Y
E		A		R		R		S		O		A		E
F	A	L	L	A	P	A	R	T		W	I	N	E	S
I		O		T		M		A		E		D		T
C	O	N	T	E	M	P	O	R	A	R	I	E	S	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	4	9	7	8	3	5	1	2
2	5	8	6	1	9	3	4	7
3	1	7	2	5	4	6	8	9
9	2	3	1	7	5	4	6	8
8	6	5	4	3	2	7	9	1
4	7	1	9	6	8	2	3	5
7	8	2	3	4	1	9	5	6
5	3	6	8	9	7	1	2	4
1	9	4	5	2	6	8	7	3

FAITH

Easter: believe in Lord's words

If one were to assign a symbol to represent Easter, it would be of an empty tomb with a large stone rolled away from the entrance. The rolling away of the stone is an important aspect of Easter. After the body of Jesus was laid in a tomb, a large stone was rolled to the entrance by human hands. On the third day, this stone was rolled away by the hands of an angel and Jesus rose from the dead. Indeed, the whole of Christianity rests on this fact that we have a risen Lord who conquered death, said Rev. W.J. Samuel in a lecture.

On the evening of Friday, the disciples of Jesus were not at the tomb. Joseph of Arimathea closed the tomb and walked away. Earlier, he begged Pilate to hand over Jesus' body to him. Being a member of the Sanhedrin, a council that had condemned Jesus, Joseph was taking a risk.

Then there were Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who accompanied the body of Jesus from the Cross to the tomb. Such is their strength that they remained with Jesus in His hours of pain and agony. The women were at the tomb as He was laid and they arrived early Sunday morning to smear spices on Him. In contrast, the disciples of Jesus did not come near the tomb although they were all in Jerusalem.

Most importantly, none of his disciples, nor Joseph and the loyal women at the tomb, remembered Jesus' prophecy that He would rise. When the women arrived early Sunday, they found the tomb open. An angel had rolled away the stone. The Gospel of Luke says, the angel asked the women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen."

JOHANNESBURG

UAE rejects South Africa's request to extradite two Gupta brothers

GALLO IMAGES

South Africa said on Friday it had learnt with "shock and dismay" that the UAE had turned down its request to extradite two brothers accused of orchestrating industrial-scale corruption. The Guptas are alleged to have colluded with former President Jacob Zuma to siphon off state assets from South Africa. AFP

KANO

Gunmen attack village, kill nearly 50 people in north central Nigeria

AP

Gunmen have attacked a rural village in northern central Nigeria killing dozens of people in the latest in a string of deadly assaults in the region. The attack happened on Wednesday in Umogidi community, Benue State, where clashes are common between nomadic herders and settled farmers competing for resources. AFP

MOSCOW

U.S. reporter Gershkovich charged with spying: Russian news agencies

AP

Moscow has formally charged U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich with espionage, Russian news agencies reported on Friday, adding that he had denied the accusations. The arrest of the Wall Street Journal correspondent prompted an outcry from media outlets and rights groups, as well as government officials in Washington. AFP

KYIV

Ukraine rejects Lula's suggestion to surrender Crimea for peace talks

AFP

Ukraine on Friday rejected a proposition from Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who had suggested Kyiv should give up Crimea to end the war with Russia. Lula had said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky "could not get everything" and suggested Ukraine could give up Crimea to begin peace talks. AFP

Two dead in West Bank attack after Israel bombards Lebanon, Gaza Strip

Victims identified as Israeli sisters while a third woman who was seriously injured is their mother; Israeli Army vows not to allow Palestinian factions to open a new front in Lebanon; PM Netanyahu says Israel's response will exact a heavy price

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Two Israeli sisters were killed and their mother seriously wounded in a shooting in the occupied West Bank on Friday, hours after Israel bombarded Gaza and Lebanon following rocket fire by Palestinian militants.

The broadening of the conflict since the Israeli police clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque drew appeals for restraint from the international community but the Israeli Army vowed it would not allow Palestinian factions to open a new front in Lebanon.

Mangled remains: Israeli medics check a damaged car at the scene of the shooting attack in the Jordan Valley on Friday. REUTERS

A barrage of over 30 rockets fired from Lebanon on Thursday marked the biggest escalation since Israel fought a 34-day war with Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah in 2006.

The Israeli Army said it had launched a manhunt for the perpetrators of Friday's shooting.

It said the women were fired on in a car as they passed through Hamra junction, in the northern part of the Jordan Valley.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Oded Revivi, mayor of the illegal West Bank settlement Efrat, confirmed the two dead were sisters, adding that the third woman who was seriously wounded was their mother.

Army's attack

The attack came after the Army carried out air strikes and an artillery bombardment before dawn in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

In response to Thursday's rocket fire, Israel "struck targets, including terror infrastructures, belonging to the Hamas terrorist organisation in southern Lebanon", the Army said – the first time Israel has confirmed an attack on Lebanese territory since April 2022.

The Lebanese Army said it had found and dismantled a multiple rocket launcher in an olive grove in the Marjayoun area near the border, still loaded with six rockets primed to fire at Israel.

In Gaza, the Israeli Army said it had hit two tunnels and "two weapon manufacturing sites" belonging to Hamas.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said: "Israel's response, tonight and in the future, will exact a heavy price."

Saudi-Omani team to talk to Houthis to end Yemen war

Reuters
RIYADH/ADEN

A Saudi-Omani delegation is planning to travel to Yemen's capital Sanaa next week to hash out a permanent ceasefire deal with Houthi officials and end the country's eight-year-old conflict, two sources involved in the talks said.

If an agreement is reached, Yemen's warring parties could announce an agreement before Islam's Eid holiday starting April 20, the sources said.

The Saudi and Yemeni governments did not immediately respond to requests for a comment.

The visit by Saudi officials to Sanaa is an indication of progress in Oman-mediated talks between the kingdom and the Iran-aligned Houthi movement, which run in parallel to UN peace efforts.

It is also a sign that regional rifts are easing after rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to restore relations last month after years of hostility and backing opposite sides in Middle Eastern conflicts, including Yemen.

The Houthis, who ousted the internationally recognised government from Sanaa in late 2014, are de facto authorities in North Yemen and say they are rising up against a corrupt system and foreign aggression.

The discussions are focused on a full reopening of Yemen's ports and airports, payment of wages for public servants, a rebuilding process and a political transition, they added.

Pak. Army says Baloch insurgency chief arrested

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan top intelligence agency arrested a high-value target in an operation against a Baloch insurgent group in the country's southwest, the Army said Friday.

The military statement said Gulzar Imam, also known by the name Shambay, is the militant founder and leader of the banned Baloch Nationalist Army. An umbrella group for Blauch insurgents, the BNA was formed after two main insurgent groups merged: The Baloch Republican Army and United Baluch Army.

The Army said BNA had been involved in dozens of terrorist attacks in the country, including those on security forces.

People's President: Emmanuel Macron arrives for a visit at the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou in China on Friday. AFP

Huge crowds greet Macron at China varsity

Agence France-Presse
GUANGZHOU

French President Emmanuel Macron was greeted by a huge crowd at a university in southern China on Friday on the last day of a visit in which he repeatedly pushed his counterpart Xi Jinping to help end the Ukraine conflict.

Mr. Macron, who landed in the capital Beijing on Wednesday, said he was seeking to dissuade China from supporting Russia's invasion of its neighbour.

On Friday, he flew to the southern city of Guangzhou, where he was mobbed by hundreds of screaming students and fans desperate for a selfie or a high-five with the French leader.

Mr. Macron then spoke to students and answered their questions before an early dinner with Mr. Xi ahead of meetings with investors and a flight home.

Eight persons killed in Bangladesh tribal insurgent gunfight

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

At least eight persons were killed during a gunfight between two tribal insurgent groups at a remote town in Bangladesh's restive Chittagong hills, the police said on Friday.

The skirmish took place near Ronwagnchhari, a town shut to tourists since October when security forces launched a crackdown against the Kuki-Chin National Front (KNF), a newly emerged rebel group.

The operation has displaced hundreds of tribal people, with some walking for days to cross the border and take refuge in a remote corner of northeastern India.

Local police chief Tariqul Islam told AFP two rival armed groups clashed on Thursday night and officers recovered the dead bodies of eight tribal people on Friday morning.

"They were killed in a gun battle," Mr. Islam told AFP, adding that around 60 people had fled their homes in Khamtangpara village where the attack took place.

Another district police officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity told AFP that the victims were Bawm, a small Christian tribal community.

They were suspected members of the KNF that had been shot dead by a splinter faction of the United People's Democratic Front, he added.

Last month, the Bangladesh Army accused the KNF of killing one of its troops and injuring another.

The elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) police unit also accuses the KNF of harbouring and training Islamist extremists.

China sends warships, jets towards Taiwan, slaps sanctions on U.S. entities

Agence France-Presse
TAIPEI

China sent warships and aircraft near Taiwan for a second day on Friday and said the island remains its "inseparable part", after President Tsai Ing-wen angered Beijing by meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

Three Chinese warships sailed in waters surrounding the self-ruled island, while a fighter jet and an anti-submarine helicopter also crossed Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ), the Defence Ministry said in Taipei.

Ms. Tsai returned on Friday after visiting Taiwan's dwindling band of official diplomatic allies in Latin America, with two U.S. stopovers that included meetings with Mr. McCarthy and other lawmakers.

"We let the international community see that Taiwan is more united when facing pressure and threats," she told reporters, describing her trip as a success.

"We will never yield to suppression and we will not stop interacting with the world because of any hindrance."

Chinese sanctions

On Friday, China slapped sanctions on Taipei's de facto ambassador to the U.S., Hsiao Bi-khim, banning her from entering China and accusing her of "deliberately inciting cross-strait confrontation".

Taiwan condemned the move, saying Beijing was attempting to "further suppress our country's international space".

Beijing also announced sanctions against the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based conservative think tank, as well as the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, which hosted the meeting. The two organisations are now barred from engaging in transactions and cooperation with Chinese entities.

THE HINDU GROUP

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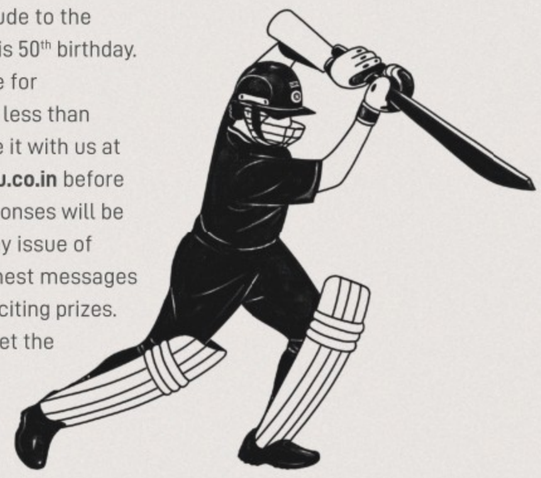
FOR HIM BE
NO LESS.

Express your gratitude to the Master Blaster on his 50th birthday. Pen a personal note for Sachin Tendulkar in less than 100 words and share it with us at **sportstar@thehindu.co.in** before April 20. Top 50 responses will be published in the May issue of Sportstar. The warmest messages also stand to win exciting prizes. So, take guard and let the words flow straight from your heart.

#50forSachin



SPORTSTAR

INBRIEF

Toyota suspends bookings for some Innova Hycross variants

Toyota Kirloskar Motor has announced a temporary halt of bookings for the top-end variants of Innova Hycross – ZX & ZX (O) – with effect from April 8 on account of supply challenges. "The bookings of the other grades of Innova Hycross, both the hybrid and gasoline, will continue," the company said in a statement. "We are doing our best to resume the Innova Hycross bookings for the said variants at the earliest," the company added.

Sundram Fasteners bags GM's supplier award for 10th time

The powertrain components division of Sundram Fasteners Ltd. has bagged the supplier of the year award from General Motors for the tenth time, the city-based auto-component major said on Friday. "Our long standing association with General Motors has been built on a foundation of mutual trust, collaboration and an unyielding focus on delivering exceptional quality and customer satisfaction," company Managing Director Arathi Krishna said. PTI

Chennai Petroleum's refinery logs 'record' FY23 throughput

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (CPCL) said its Manali Refinery has achieved the highest-ever throughput of 11.3 MMTPA in 2022-23. The company said it had surpassed past records in the production of diesel (HSD), petrol (MS), aviation turbine Fuel (ATF), naphtha and hexane by 26.8%, 14.3%, 47.4%, 23% and 6.3% respectively compared with the last year, all of which were the highest-ever in CPCL's history.

Drugmakers get more time to join 'Track and Trace' system for exports

DGFT extends deadline for implementation to August 1; manufacturers granted time for ensuring that data pertaining to maintaining parent-child relationship in packaging levels for export of drug formulations is uploaded on the central portal

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

Drugmakers have got another extension, this time up to August 1, to help implement the Track and Trace system for export of pharmaceuticals consignments.

On the cards for at least eight years, the system was mooted as a measure to address counterfeit and product recall challenges. The latest extension, from the earlier March 31 deadline, came in the backdrop of pharma exporters' body Pharmexcil's representation to the Commerce Department citing members' difficulties in implementing the system.

Securing drug exports

The long-delayed system is intended to help address counterfeiting and product recall challenges

- DGFT extends the start date for implementation for both SSI and non-SSI manufactured drugs
- Pharmexcil DG Bhaskar rules out any further delay in roll out, terms product traceability a good manufacturing practice
- Initially, secondary and tertiary packing to be brought under the barcode-based tracking and tracing system

"The date for implementation of Track and Trace system for export of drug formulations with respect to maintaining the parent-child relationship in packaging levels and its uploading on central portal has been extended upto 1.08.2023 for both SSI and non SSI manufactured drugs," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a notification.

'Good practices'

Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) Director General Ravi Udaya Bhaskar ruled out the likelihood of any further delay in the roll out. "We have already paid C-DAC who is working on this [project], thus no further postponement will be there," he said, highlighting how product traceability was a part of good manufacturing practices.

Initially, secondary and tertiary packing will get covered under the system, the primary packing will be included at a later stage, Mr. Bhaskar added.

U.S. economy adds 2.36 lakh nonfarm jobs; unemployment rate slipped to 3.5% in March

Reuters
WASHINGTON

The U.S. economy continued to add jobs at a brisk pace in March, pushing the unemployment rate down to 3.5%, signs of persistent labour market tightness that could see the Federal Reserve raising interest rates again next month.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 2,36,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department said in its closely watched employment report on Friday. Data for February was revised up to show 3,26,000 jobs were added instead of 3,11,000 as previously reported.

Some of the slowdown in hiring reflected the fading boost from unseasonably mild weather in January and February.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls rising 2,39,000. Estimates ranged from 1,50,000 to 3,42,000. The economy needs to create about 1,00,000 jobs per month to keep up with the growth in the working-age population.

As with most recent economic data, it was too early for financial market stress, triggered by the failure of two regional banks in March, to show up in the employment report.

The unemployment rate fell to 3.5%, from 3.6% in February. Average hourly earnings rose 0.3% in after gaining 0.2% in February.

CNG, PNG prices may fall 9-11%, says Crisil Ratings

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The prices of compressed natural gas (CNG) used by vehicles and piped natural gas (PNG) used by homes could be reduced by 9-11% with the government accepting the key recommendations of the Kirit Parikh Committee, Crisil Ratings wrote in a note. Had the previous pricing regime continued, prices would have risen further.

"This revised gas pricing norms would lend greater stability to gas prices for city gas distributors and sustained competitiveness with alternative fuels, thus driving demand and supporting massive capex plans," the rating agency said on Friday.

Till now, the price of gas produced from fields covered under the Administered Price Mechanism (APM) regime – which accounts for 70% of domestic gas production – was determined semi-annually based on a formula that benchmarks it to average international prices at four gas trading hubs.

As per a key recommendation of the committee accepted by the Government, the APM formula is now revised and determined as a 10% slope to crude oil prices, but with a floor and ceiling price of $4/mmBtu and $6.5/mmBtu, respectively.

"This would balance the interests of domestic gas producers while incentivising the city gas consumers," Crisil Ratings said.

RBI will pivot to rate cuts in Oct.: Nomura

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Japanese brokerage Nomura on Friday said Reserve Bank of India's 6.5% GDP growth estimate for FY24 is "too optimistic", and the central bank will pivot to rate cuts from October.

The brokerage said it agrees with the RBI's projections on price rise, and said that the worst of headline inflation is behind us.

"The revised GDP growth forecast of 6.5%... appears too optimistic," it said, adding growth will likely slow to 5.3%.

Several economists have cut their FY24 growth forecasts in the recent past, with many of them pegging it under 6% as well.

Nomura said it expects a downside of over 1 percentage point to the RBI's growth estimate on weaker global growth, high uncertainty and the lagged effects of domestic policy tightening.

Tata Motors Q4 global wholesales rise 8%

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Tata Motors Group's global wholesales rose to 3,61,361 units in Q4 FY23, logging a growth of 8% from Q4 FY22, Tata Motors said in a statement.

Global wholesales of all Tata Motors commercial vehicles and the Tata Daewoo range in Q4 FY23 was at 1,18,321 units, a fall of 3% compared with Q4 FY22. Global wholesales of Tata Motors passenger vehicles, including electric vehicles, in Q4 FY23 was at 1,35,654 units, higher by 10% as compared with Q4 FY22.

Global wholesales for Jaguar Land Rover in the January-March period was 1,07,386 vehicles (which includes CJLR – a JV between JLR and Chery Automobiles and an unconsolidated subsidiary for JLR – volumes of 12,737 units), Tata Motors said.

India's forex reserves drop by $329 million to $578.45 bn

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by $329 million to $578.449 billion for the week ended March 31, on decline in gold reserves, the RBI said on Friday.

The forex kitty had risen handsomely in the previous two reporting weeks, and rose by $5.977 billion to $578.778 billion for the week ended March 24.

The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee.

VOC Port to set up offshore windmills

The Hindu Bureau
THOOTHUKUDI

The VOC Port plans to generate at least 2,000 MW power from these windmills within a year

After the Union Government handpicked the V. O. Chidambaranar Port as its nodal agency for installing offshore windmills along the southern Tamil Nadu coast, the port has planned to generate at least 2,000 MW power from these windmills within a year.

Speaking to reporters in Thoothukudi on Friday, Chairman of the port T. K. Ramachandran said the installation of offshore windmills generating 2,000 MW power would be completed within a year.

"These windmills will have unusually bigger blades and hence these blades will be assembled at the VOC Port itself and taken to the site identified in the sea for installation," Mr. Ramachandran said.

"Hence, the port has earmarked ₹700 crore for creating infrastructure for assembling the blades of the offshore windmills."

Godrej firm to invest ₹100 cr. in Early Spring start-up fund

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Godrej Consumer Products Ltd. (GCPL) said it will invest ₹100 crore in Early Spring, a new ₹300-crore early-stage consumer fund being set up by Spring Marketing Capital (Spring) to fund and back founders 'who are building consumer brands for tomorrow.'

GCPL will anchor the fund in addition to offering its expertise and experience to help founders build strong, sustainable companies, the firm said.

Wheat output to hit record level despite crop loss, says Govt.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The government on Friday said wheat production loss due to recent inclement weather is likely to be in the range of 1-2 million tonnes but overall production will reach a record 112.2 million tonne in the current year on higher acreage and yield.

Releasing a private wheat crop estimate at an event, Subodh Kumar Singh, Additional Secretary in the Food Ministry, said there is a 3-5% increase in wheat acreage, and that production loss due to untimely rains and hailstorms would be about 1-2 million tonnes. However, "production would be 5-5.5 million tonnes higher than last year," he said.

Sport

Hovland, Rahm and Koepka share two-stroke lead

AUGUSTA MASTERS

Agence France-Presse
AUGUSTA

Impressive rally: After starting with a double bogey, Rahm quickly made amends to be in the strongest position among the pre-tournament favourites. AP

Norway's Viktor Hovland, Spain's Jon Rahm and American Brooks Koepka shared the first-round lead at the Masters on Thursday after taking advantages of easier-than-usual conditions to card seven-under 65s.

Rain in recent days has softened Augusta National, making the often rapid and challenging greens much more benign, and the trio seized a two-stroke lead over American Cameron Young and Australian Jason Day.

Favourite, defending champion and World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler was one of seven players three strokes behind. But five-time Masters champion Tiger Woods looks more likely to be fighting to avoid the cut than for the title after he shot a two-over 74 with five bogeys.

World No. 3 Rahm's score was the day's most impressive given that he started with a double bogey. But he quickly made amends to be n the strongest position among pre-tournament favourites.

Woods made three bogeys on his opening seven holes but recovered slightly with a birdie on the par-5 eighth, where he almost chipped in for an eagle. After a bogey on the 11th, Woods again bounced back with birdies on the 15th and 16th before his efforts were a little undone by a bogey on the 18th.

Also on 68 were Ireland's Shane Lowry, Americans Xander Shauffele, Sam Burns and Gary Woodland along with Australian Adam Scott. Reigning US Amateur champion Sam Bennett had a memorable round, matching Sheffler's score with his bogey-free round.

World No. 2 Rory McIlroy finished on even-par after an inconsistent round that saw him make five birdies, three bogeys and a double bogey on the par-4 seventh.

The scores: 65: Brooks Koepka (USA), Viktor Hovland (Nor), Jon Rahm (Esp); **67:** Jason Day (Aus), Cameron Young (USA); **68:** Gary Woodland (USA), Scottie Scheffler (USA), Sam Bennett (USA), Sam Burns (USA), Xander Schauffele (USA), Adam Scott (Aus), Shane Lowry (Irl).

North Kerala in for a feast as Super Cup kicks off

P.K. Ajith Kumar
KOZHIKODE

Big-time football is back in the land of the beautiful game.

Few regions in India can boast of as much passion for football as northern Kerala.

The fans of Malappuram and Kozhikode districts have an excellent opportunity to witness the best of Indian football, at the Super Cup tournament, which kicks off here on Saturday.

The action at Manjeri will begin on Sunday.

Matches in Group A and Group C will be played here while Manjeri will host Group B and Group D.

Three ISL teams figure in each group except A, in which there are only two; two I-League clubs, RoundGlass Punjab and Sreenidi Deccan, complete the group.

Except the champion RoundGlass, the other I-League teams – Sreenidi, Aizawl, Gokulam Kerala and Churchill Brothers – had to come through the qualifiers.

Those matches at Manjeri did not attract big crowds, but the main event could.

The matches involving Kerala Blasters especially are expected to fill stands, given the team's massive fan-base.

Blasters is scheduled to play Bengaluru FC on April 16, in their first meeting since their acrimonious clash in the ISL playoff last month.

On the opening day, Bengaluru meets Sreenidi, while Bengaluru takes on RoundGlass.

The final will be played here on April 25.

The groupings:

Group A: Kerala Blasters, Bengaluru FC, RoundGlass Punjab and Sreenidi Deccan.

Group B: Hyderabad FC, Odisha FC, East Bengal and Aizawl FC.

Group C: FC Goa, ATK Mohun Bagan, Jamshedpur FC and Gokulam Kerala.

Group D: Mumbai City FC, Chennaiyin FC, NorthEast United and Churchill Brothers.

STANDING BY

Livingstone set to link up with Punjab Kings on April 10

England batter Liam Livingstone is set to get fitness clearance from the ECB by the weekend and will join his IPL team Punjab Kings on April 10. Livingstone has not played competitive cricket since suffering a knee injury on his Test debut in Pakistan four months ago. He was bought by PBKS for ₹11.5 crore.

BATTLE GOES ON

Pollard and Bravo rivalry will continue, off the field this time

For the last decade, the rivalry between Kieron Pollard and Dwayne Bravo was synonymous with the MI-CSK battles. It will continue on Saturday albeit off the field. While Pollard is MI's batting coach, Bravo is now CSK's bowling coach. "I look forward to my batters against DJ's bowlers. We'll see who will be singing at the end," said Pollard.

GROWING BELIEF

Excited to see Hetmyer almost win the game for us, says Sangakkara

Rajasthan Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara revealed that Shimron Hetmyer had a specific role to play. "He's very happy to do that role as he did last season. He is one of the best players going around in that position and he almost won the game [against Punjab Kings] from a very difficult position along with Dhruv Jurel."

BACKING A MATE

Chahar will get better as the tournament goes on: Moeen

Deepak Chahar is yet to get into the wicket-taking groove, but Moeen Ali backed his Super Kings teammate. "The only thing he is lacking is game time. He had a bad injury and is coming back after a long time. You need to bowl in a proper game to find rhythm and I think he'll get better as the tournament goes on," Moeen said.

Super Giants spinners leave Sunrisers in a tangle, make it a walk in the park

Krunal scalps three, including Markram for a golden duck; Mishra, Bishnoi prove ideal foil; Lucknow chases down the target with four overs to spare

IPL-16

M.R. Praveen Chandran
LUCKNOW

It was a night to remember for Krunal Pandya. After his mesmerising spell (three for 18) restricted Sunrisers Hyderabad to 121 for eight, the left-hander played a cameo (34, 23b, 4x4, 1x6) to engineer Lucknow Super Giants' five-wicket win in an IPL match at the Ekana Cricket stadium here on Friday.

It was Krunal's 55-run stand for the third wicket with skipper K.L. Rahul (35) that put Super Giants on course. Though leg-spinner Adil Rashid produced a double strike – he removed Rahul and LSG debutant Romario Shepherd off consecutive deliveries – it came a bit too late for Sunrisers who succumbed to their second straight loss.

In the PowerPlay, Rahul and Kyle Mayers (13) judiciously chose their moments to attack as Lucknow began briskly. Though Mayers and Deepak Hooda (7) fell in quick succession, No. 4 Krunal stepped in to neutralise the Rashid threat. The left-hander lofted the England spinner over long-on for a six and also punished the loose deliveries. Though Krunal fell to Umran Malik with the score on 100, he had done enough to swing things Super Giants' way.

Wily customer: Krunal spelt trouble for the Sunrisers batters with an accurate and productive spell. SPORTZPICS/IPL

Nicholas Pooran not only survived Rashid's hat-trick delivery, but also top-edged the ball for a four. He then clubbed T. Natarajan for a six to signal victory.

Earlier, the Super Giants spinners extracted the maximum from the slow and low pitch. If Krunal was the standout performer, Amit Mishra (two for 23) and Ravi Bishnoi (one for 16) played the perfect support cast, the trio conceding just 59 in 12 overs.

Opting to bat, Aiden Markram's men struggled on a wicket where the ball skidded through and didn't encourage stroke-play. Opener Mayank Agarwal was an early victim when he chipped Krunal straight to Marcus Stoinis at extra-cover off a delivery which stopped on him.

Krunal varied the pace and kept the batters on a tight leash in the Power-Play though Anmolpreet Singh broke the shackles by hitting him for consecutive boundaries in the fifth over. Rahul Tripathi, after a nervous start, scooped Unadkat over fine-leg for a boundary but only 43 came in the first six overs. In between, Anmolpreet successfully reviewed a lbw decision after missing a slower ball from Yash Thakur. However, Krunal dealt a twin blow in his third over to push Sunrisers deeper into the abyss.

Anmolpreet's luck with the DRS ran out as he was trapped in front. Markram was bowled for a golden duck by a beauty.

Sunrisers slipped further when Ravi Bishnoi lured Harry Brook (3) out of his crease and wicketkeeper Pooran did the rest. Tripathi and Washington Sundar couldn't force the pace in the middle overs as the spinners held sway.

Next assignment

SRH: April 9 **vs. PBKS**
Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

LSG: April 10 **vs. RCB**
Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Anmolpreet Singh lbw b Krunal 31 *(26b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Mayank Agarwal c Stoinis b Krunal 8 *(7b, 1x4)*, Rahul Tripathi c Mishra b Yash Thakur 34 *(41b, 4x4)*, Aiden Markram b Krunal 0 *(1b)*, Harry Brook st. Pooran b Bishnoi 3 *(4b)*, Washington Sundar c Hooda b Mishra 16 *(28b)*, Abdul Samad (not out) 21 *(10b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Adil Rashid c Hooda b Mishra 4 *(3b, 1x4)*, Umran Malik run out 0 *(0b)*, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-2): 4; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 121.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-21 (Mayank, 2.5 overs), 2-50 (Anmolpreet, 7.5), 3-50 (Markram, 7.6), 4-55 (Brook, 8.6), 5-94 (Tripathi, 17.2), 6-104 (Washington, 18.3), 7-108 (Rashid, 18.6), 8-109 (Umran, 19.1).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Mayers 1-0-5-0, Unadkat 3-0-26-0, Krunal 4-0-18-3, Yash Thakur 3-0-23-1, Bishnoi 4-0-16-1, Hooda 1-0-8-0, Mishra 4-0-23-2.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Kyle Mayers c Mayank b Farooqi 13 *(14b, 2x4)*, K.L. Rahul lbw b Rashid 35 *(31b, 4x4)*, Deepak Hooda c & b Bhuvneshwar 7 *(8b, 1x6)*, Krunal Pandya c Anmolpreet b Umran 34 *(23b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Marcus Stoinis (not out) 10 *(13b, 2x4)*, Romario Shepherd lbw b Rashid 0 *(1b)*, Nicholas Pooran (not out) 11 *(6b, 1x4, 1x6)*; Extras (b-2, w-15): 17; Total (for five wkts. in 16 overs): 127.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-35 (Mayers, 4.3), 2-45 (Hooda, 5.6), 3-100 (Krunal, 12.2), 4-114 (Rahul, 14.1), 5-114 (Shepherd, 14.2).

SUNRISERS BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 2-0-19-1, Washington 1-0-11-0, Farooqi **(Impact Player in place of Tripathi)** 3-0-13-1, Markram 2-0-14-0, Rashid 3-0-23-2, Natarajan 3-0-23-0, Umran 2-0-22-1.

Toss: SRH; **PoM:** Krunal.

LSG won by five wickets with four overs to spare.

Sai Sudharsan — building on pre-IPL form

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Gujarat Titans' B. Sai Sudharsan feels his knock against Delhi Capitals is one of the best he has played in his short career so far. The left-hander made an unbeaten 62 to help Titans recover from 54 for three and guided his team to the target of 163 in Delhi on Tuesday.

Rising to the occasion

"I think it was one of my best knocks because it was from a difficult situation, and we rose to the occasion," said Sai during a media interaction here on Friday.

After a sub-par Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament in 2022, the Tamil Nadu batter returned strongly with three centuries in the Vijay Hazare tournament and two more in the Ranji Trophy.

Asked if he was more confident in his second year after a productive domestic season, Sai said, "Actually, it started with last year's IPL. It helped me get better and prepare for the domestic season. Doing well (for TN) gave me a lot of confidence coming into this tournament."

For someone who largely plays conventional cricket, Sai revealed he has been practising shots like the scoop and ramp, which he used effectively against South African pacer Anrich Nortje.

Thanks TNPL

The 21-year-old also acknowledged the Tamil Nadu Premier League's role in his growth over the last two years. "Every youngster wants a platform to showcase talent. I got a chance to play TNPL and did well. Then I got an opportunity to play in the Syed Mushtaq Ali, and from there, I got a chance with Gujarat. It would have been difficult without a platform like that," he said.

No looking back: Sai Sudharsan says he came into the IPL high on confidence having done well for Tamil Nadu. AFP

Royals need quick turnaround as they take on Capitals

Pranay Rajiv
GUWAHATI

Rajasthan Royals will be aiming for a quick turnaround, after losing to Punjab Kings in a close encounter, as it hosts Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League at the Barsapara Stadium here on Saturday.

Royals failed to predict an early onset of dew against Kings as their bowlers leaked close to 200, which in the end proved to be too much despite a late surge by Shimron Hetmyer and Impact Player Dhruv Jurel.

Torrid start

Capitals have had a torrid start to their season, losing to Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans without putting up much of a fight.

Their batting has failed to click as a unit, with skipper David Warner's inability to switch gears holding the side back.

Time to step up: Axar, Nortje and Ngidi will be eager to get Capitals' campaign going. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Royals are sweating about the fitness of their talismanic opener Jos Buttler, who suffered an injury while fielding against Kings.

"We are waiting for our medical staff to confirm Buttler's fitness.

"We will make a final call based on that," said Kumar Sangakkara, Royals head coach.

With the game scheduled for an early start (3.30 p.m.), the dew influence would be considerably reduced.

Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians renew a long-standing rivalry

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

For the fans, it's the biggest rivalry to have emerged in the history of the Indian Premier League. For the franchise owners, it's the most-awaited match of the league stage every season.

For the players involved, it's the most important fixture of the year beyond international cricket.

Exciting contest

No wonder then that the Wankhede Stadium will be buzzing on Saturday evening when Mumbai Indians hosts Chennai Super Kings in what could be one of the most exciting contests this season.

For the home team, it will be a must-win encounter to get its campaign going. For the 11th season in succession, Mumbai Indians lost the tournament-opener. Rohit Sharma & Co. will expect their star signing Cameron Green, Suryakumar Yadav and the captain himself to get going with the willow.

Chennai's star: Super Kings will look to Ruturaj to continue his sizzling form. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Tilak Varma, who spent the better part of Friday's optional training session playing tennis-ball cricket with Piyush Chawla's son Adi, will be hoping to continue from where he left off against RCB.

Super Kings, on the other hand, will be looking for more from Shivam Dube who showed some spark in both his visits to the crease. Pacer Tushar Deshpande, who has been bowling too many no-balls and loose deliveries, will be eager to get his landing as well as radar right.

With the Maharashtra duo of Ruturaj Gaikwad and Rajvardhan Hangargekar pulling their weight, Dhoni's men will be hoping to register a second successive win.

Today's matches

Guwahati, 3.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **26**
RR **13** | DC **13**

PREVIOUS MEETING
DC won by **eight wickets**, 2022

Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **34**
MI **20** | CSK **14**

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by **five wickets**, 2022

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA APP

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Lucknow Super Giants	3	2	1	4	1.358
Gujarat Titans	2	2	0	4	0.700
Punjab Kings	2	2	0	4	0.333
Kolkata Knight Riders	2	1	1	2	2.056
Rajasthan Royals	2	1	1	2	1.675
Chennai Super Kings	2	1	1	2	0.036
Royal Challengers Bangalore	2	1	1	2	-1.256
Delhi Capitals	2	0	2	0	-1.703
Mumbai Indians	1	0	1	0	-1.981
Sunrisers Hyderabad	2	0	2	0	-2.867

After the LSG-SRH match on April 7

A BG-BGE

INBRIEF

Mushfiqur guides Bangladesh to seven-wkt. win over Ireland

Mushfiqur Rahim hit a quickfire half-century on Friday and seal a seven-wicket victory over Ireland in their one-off Dhaka Test. Ireland was bowled out for 292 soon after resuming on the fourth day and Mushfiqur top-scored for the hosts with seven fours from his 51 runs.

The scores: Ireland 214 & 292 in 116 overs (Harry Tector 56, Lorcan Tucker 108, Andy McBrine 72; Taijul Islam 2/90, Ebadot Hossain 3/37) lost to Bangladesh 369 & 138/3 in 27.1 overs (Tamim Iqbal 31, Mushfiqur Rahim 51 n.o.).

Mangalore BC enters the Super League phase

Mangalore BC defeated Merchants BC Davanagere 73-57 to enter the Super League phase of the Karnataka Rural Basketball League being held at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru. Joining Mangalore in the next round are VBC Mandya, Aryans BC Mysore and Pinakini BC Gauribidanur.

The results: Pinakini BC, Gauribidanur 95 (Danny 42, Chandan 27) bt Shimoga Youths 78 (Prathvik 29, Kiran 29); K.S. Hegde BC Nitte 74 (Mohit 15, Salman 10) bt Miracle BC Hubli 46 (Arvind 18, Puneeth 14); Merchants BC Davangere 63 (Vishnu 28) bt Brothers BC Bijapur 52 (Salman 22); Aryans BC Mysore 101 (Shakti 19, Deepak 17) bt Rovers BC Dharwad 81 (Vishwa 18, Tejas 10).

Pinakini BC Gauribidanur 92 (Danny 27, Chandan 21) bt Rising Star BC Mysore 80 (Sahil 28, Madhav 12); Rovers BC Dharwad 51 (Varun 16, Darshan 10) bt Gulbarga BC 31 (Chetan 10); VBC Mandya 75 (Shashank Raj 12, Raghavendra 10) bt KS Hegde Nitte 66 (Mohith 20, Srujan 15); Mangalore BC 73 (Ashwij 23, Sowkin Shetty 12) bt Merchants BC Davangere 57 (Vishnu 19, Darshan 11).

LIVE TELECAST

New Zealand vs Sri Lanka: 3rd T20I, Prime Video, 6.30 a.m.

NBA: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 8 a.m.

BWF Orleans Masters: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 p.m.

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.

Serie A: Jio Cinema App, 4, 8, 10 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 5, 7.30 p.m. & 10 p.m.

LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

Golf: Augusta Masters, 1Sports, 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Shardul exceeded expectations, says Rana

Knight Riders captain also showers praise on Rinku for his role in the team's recovery from a precarious position and Suyash for providing the X-factor; RCB coach Bangar admits his team lost the plot when the KKR spinners applied pressure

IPL-16

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Nitish Rana heaped praise on all-rounder Shardul Thakur for his explosive 29-ball 68 which helped the home team outsmart a formidable Royal Challengers Bangalore by 81 runs in the Indian Premier League on its return to the Eden Gardens here on Thursday night.

After gaining from Afghan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz's half-century, KKR recovered from 89 for five to amass 204 for seven, primarily due to a 103-run stand between Shardul and Rinku Singh.

"I always thought he (Shardul) was an impact batter, but his batting exceeded my expectations," said Rana at the post-match press conference.

"Rinku's innings was also very important. I told him to keep playing till the 19th or 20th over," Rana said.

Rana was also happy with the spinners, including debutant Impact Player Suyash Sharma. "I wanted to bring in Sunil (Narine) in the PowerPlay and then Varun (Chakravarthy) and both of them gave breakthroughs. It was very important to take wickets in the middle overs.

"Suyash is a normal leg-spinner with an X-factor. He has a very high arm-speed with an orthodox action, so it's difficult to pick him. He's also very quick through the air," said Rana.

RCB coach Sanjay Bangar said his team was outplayed. "The way Shardul and Rinku batted, they took the match away."

"It's about keeping wickets in hand when you are chasing over 200. We started well but they pegged the match really well, especially when Varun and Sunil applied pressure," said Bangar.

Crucial blow: Spinners played their part in KKR's win. Here, Kohli is bowled by Narine. K.R. DEEPAK

2011 WC winning moment to be converted into a landmark at the Wankhede Stadium

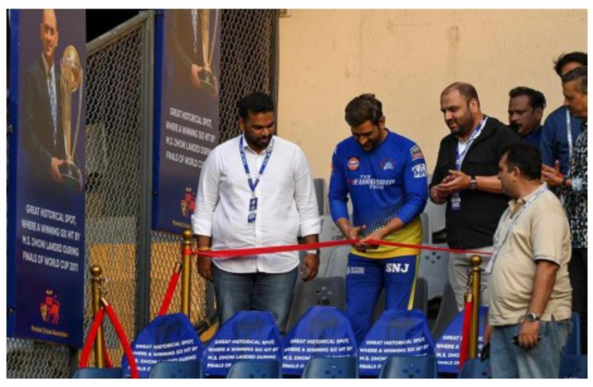
Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Seat numbers J282 to 286 of the fifth row at the extreme right of the MCA Pavilion – a stand primarily occupied by the Mumbai Cricket Association member club representatives for big matches at the Wankhede Stadium – were in focus on Friday.

Having been identified as the closest position of M.S. Dhoni's famous six that sealed India's long-awaited World Cup triumph in 2011, the Chennai Super Kings skipper formally consented for a section of the seats to be converted into a landmark to be created by the MCA.

Immediately after CSK arrived for its training session on Friday, Dhoni – in the presence of MCA officials – cut a ribbon to mark the beginning of the project.

"We want that historic moment to be etched permanently at the stadium, so we requested MS for his permission and he responded favourably right away," said Amol Kale, the MCA president.



Grand plan: Dhoni inaugurates the historical spot where the winning six hit by him in the 2011 World Cup final landed. EMMANUAL YOGINI

"One of these five seats will be permanently marked as the 'MS Seat' very soon and will be dedicated to Dhoni and his exploits."

While the exact position of where the six landed on April 2, 2011 is still debated, the MCA has symbolically identified these five seats.

"It will be a historic moment for everyone. The landmark will inspire all future generations of cricketers to try and chase their dream.

"MCA has dedicated a permanent place for MS Dhoni and it will remind everyone of his excellence," said Ajinkya Naik, the MCA secretary.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Shreyank stars in Whirlwind Cricketers' title triumph

Shreyank Sagar's all-round effort (43, 25 & 6/59) helped Whirlwind Cricketers beat Minerva CC by 21 runs in the final to win the KSCA (Group I) fifth division league title.

The scores (final): Whirlwind Cricketers 146 in 43.2 overs (Shreyank Sagar 43, K.V. Bharat 29, K.P. Mukund 5/47) & 159/7 in 30 overs (Rahul Ghosh 27, C.R. Kumarswamy 28, Shreyank Sagar 25, K.V. Bharat 25, K.P. Mukund 3/57, K.P. Bhargav 3/41) bt Minerva 93 in 27.4 overs (N. Samarth 5/35, Rishabh R. Moudgal 3/25) & 191 in 29.3 overs (S. Ramesh 27, Varun P. Annadani 46, K.P. Bhargav 29, Shreyank Sagar 6/59).

Champion: The Whirlwind Cricketers team that won the KSCA (Group I) fifth division league title. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Manjunatha scalps seven

R. Manjunatha's seven-wicket haul (7/14) helped KPTCL Sports Organisation defeat Southern Railway Institute, Mysore, by 11 runs in the KSCA (Group II) second division tournament.

The scores: KPTCL Sports Organisation 144 in 20 overs (S. Rajashekar 26, B.S. Suhas 3/16) bt Southern Railway Institute, Mysore 133/9 in 20 overs (S.U. Karthik 57, R. Manjunatha 7/14).

RBI Recreation Club 195/5 in 20 overs (B.U. Shivakumar 63, G.S. Chiranjeevi 63, M. Utham Aiyappa 38 n.o.) bt LIC S&RC 131/9 in 20 overs (S.H. Swaroop 29, K.H. Manjunath 32, S. Appu 3/32, B.U. Shivakumar 3/13).

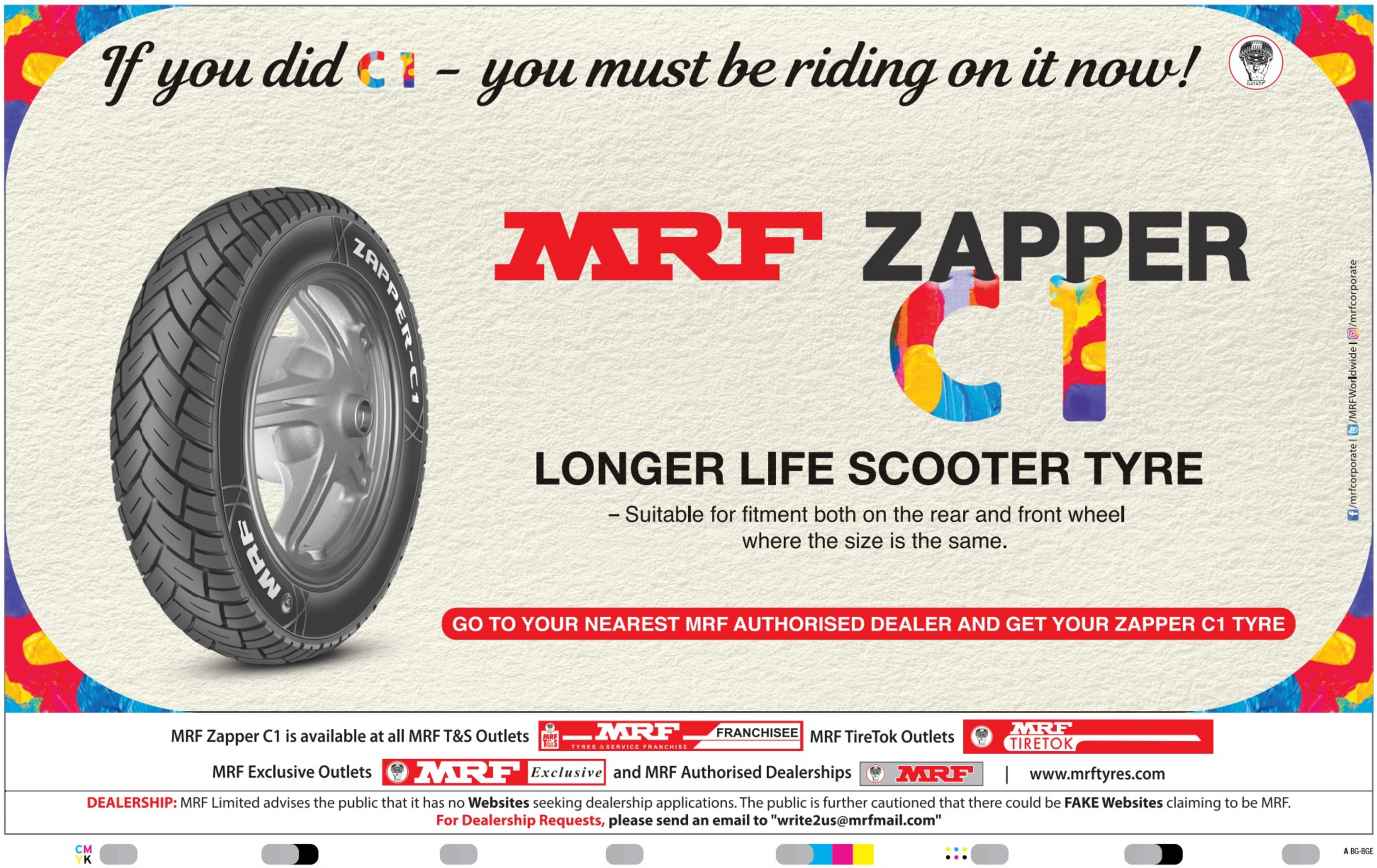
BEML (2) SC, Mysore 68/7 in 20 overs (S.M. Shamanth 3/8) lost to HAL SC 69/1 in 7.3 overs (Rahul Prasanna 26, Kamal Kumar Halder 27 n.o.).

Indiabulls Housing & Finance Ltd. 202/5 in 20 overs (M. Keerthi 31, S. Chethan 56, R. Akshay 54, N. Surendhar 32 n.o.) bt Union Bank of India 138/8 in 20 overs (Syed Gazi Salahuddin 42 n.o.).

Rakesh nets brace in HAL's big win

R. Rakesh scored a brace as HAL FC thrashed Sree Gajanana 6-1 in the BDFA A-division league here on Friday.

The results: HAL FC 6 (Alister Fernandes 35, R. Rakesh 56, 59, S. Tejas 61, Anwar Hussain 78, Jebin Dhas Maridasan 80+7) bt Sree Gajanana 1 (V. Vikram 15); South United FC 5 (Sanket Anil Salokhe 38, 53, Mangminalal Vaiphei 60, Sapam Malemnganba Singh 70, Md. Atlab Hussain 80+5) bt Blitz FC 0; RWF FC 1 (Adiran Peter 74) drew with Income Tax FC 1 (A. Sema 70).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